

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, acting in my capacity as a Senator from Oklahoma, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I have been listening to the debate on education reform for the last few days. I think it is interesting we are talking about two different things. I hear Senator WELLSTONE and Senator KENNEDY talk about money. Everything is about money. We are absolutely convinced if we don't have reform of our public education system, throwing the rest of the Federal budget at it will not work. We will not see improvements if we don't reform the underlying system.

Our public education system is failing. It is failing because there is such a variation of standards. Some of our public schools are terrific, but they are not all terrific. Some are even abysmal. That is not the standard of quality for public education we should stand for in this country. We are trying to reform the system so there will be a standard under which any child in this country who is educated in our public schools will be a child who can reach his or her full potential so that no child will be left behind. We are trying to set a minimum standard that every child must meet or, if the child doesn't, that we will give that child help.

We have seen the high school dropout rates. They are alarming in some areas of our country. What is interesting, when we go to the root of the problem and we talk to these young people who have dropped out of high school in despair, there is a basic reason. The basic reason is they can't read.

Why not go down to the third grade and catch these young people who are having problems reading and give them a chance to have the full ability to absorb the education they are receiving? If we shuffle them from one grade to the next grade to the next grade, a social promotion, and they still can't read in the 10th grade, who is surprised that the children are frustrated? They are sitting in classes, trying to learn algebra, math, science, history, and geography, and they don't have third grade reading skills. Of course they are going to be frustrated.

What we are proposing is an accountability, a standard, that says every child will be tested in the third grade. If that child isn't reading at grade level

in the third grade, we are going to hold them back. We are going to give them tutors. We are going to give them the tools they need to be able to participate in their education and in this country the future.

That is what reform is. Reform is not just throwing more money at the problem. Reform is getting parents involved, in getting teachers, in getting principals involved, in letting the local school districts make the decisions about what will be the best for the individual children in that district. That is what reform is. It is not throwing money at it and having regulations coming out of Washington, DC.

We are trying to set a standard by which every child in this country will be able to read at grade level in the third grade. I think we are going to see the test scores soar across our country if we can get over the hurdle of talking just about money and start talking about reform.

Reform includes accountability. A lot of people wring their hands and talk about tests: We don't want tests; we don't want too many artificial tests; we don't want teachers teaching to the tests. If we are testing for the basic skills, why wouldn't we teach to the test and improve what the children are learning? If we teach to the test and the test is fundamental reading, fundamental math, fundamental science, fundamental history, then we need to have a standard by which to judge what is happening in our schools.

Another reform is reporting, making sure that parents have the tools and the information to make the best decisions for their children. In fact, if a parent doesn't know how the school is doing and how the children in the school are doing, how can they know their children are getting the best opportunity that is available?

In my State, we have a report card. It is called the Just For Kids Program. The test scores of every elementary and junior high school—and we are going now through the high schools—in Texas will have a report card that shows the test scores and how the test scores have grown in that particular school. If that school is compared to other schools in the same socioeconomic, demographic area and that school does not compare well, the parents then have the information and the parents will be able to say to the principal, wait a minute, why is this school not performing? We want to give parents the ability to question. We think by questioning, we can see improvements.

We are talking about reform, not money. We are talking about doing things a different way. We are talking about reading at grade level in the third grade so in the eighth grade the child will have the chance to learn the higher math, the history, the algebra. We are talking about accountability testing, to see if the children are keeping up, to see if we can go to the heart of the problem, if there is one, and fix

it while we still have a chance, before the young person has, in utter frustration, dropped out of high school. We get them at the lower level and we give them the chance to compete.

We also have report cards. We have report cards so parents will be armed with knowledge. Parents can go to the principal and say, why isn't this school performing? That is the most powerful force we can possibly have. If there is a coverup, if there is no test, if there is nothing by which the parents can judge the performance, of course, everyone is going to be silent and we will have continued failure.

These are the elements of reform that will make a difference in the system. This is what we are talking about when we talk about doing things in a different way in our country. We are not talking about just throwing more money at it, although the President's plan does increase education spending by over 11 percent, the largest increase of any part of his budget.

Yes, we are going to spend more money but we are going to make sure that the money goes directly to the school districts with standards that we would ask them to meet. We would ask them to meet those standards in their own way, not in some federally mandated way that might not be right for the children in those particular school districts.

I am very pleased that we are finally on this bill, and I hope we are going to come out with something that will show the parents of this country that there really is hope; there is hope for a different way; there is hope for the future for their children in public schools.

Mr. President, I am now very pleased to yield the floor to the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask to proceed for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise in support of a variety of sections of this piece of legislation. I certainly want to second the comments of the Senator from Texas, who has pointed out some of the significant strengths of the bill.

Let me talk about one specific area that I think needs clarity, and then some additional amendments I hope to offer to give parents more options.

The question of quality education I think we all understand is parental involvement. It is a good teacher, a good principal, but, most importantly it is a parent who gets involved in their child's daily activity of going to school and learning. Unfortunately, the Federal role in education has historically undermined the ability of the parent to be a participant in that activity. In fact, title I, as it has been structured over the last 25–30 years, has been a school-based, bureaucracy-based funding mechanism. It has not been directed at benefiting the child so much

as benefiting the bureaucracy which in turn theoretically benefits the child. As a result, I would argue that that is probably one of the primary reasons title I has failed, and "failure" I define is the fact that today the low-income child reads at two grade levels below their peers, and that is the same level of inefficiency or inability that the low-income child was reading at 20 years ago.

We have seen a huge amount of money spent on title I over the last 20 years—\$120 billion—but we have seen, in fact, no improvement in the performance of low-income children. So they have been, even though we have been spending a lot of money on the program, left behind.

This bill tries to address that issue. One of the ways it addresses it is as follows. It attempts to empower the parents, giving the parents a little bigger say in how their children are taught. If you are a parent and you are in a failing school, under today's rules, you have no rights. Your child is stuck in that school and there is virtually nothing you can do to help your child. Under this bill, what we say is if a school fails in the first year, we are going to come in with some additional resources to that school, significantly additional resources, and we are going to try to help that school improve. But if the school is failing in the second year, we are going to do some other things to try to improve that school. We are going to replace some people. We are going to try to dramatically improve the curriculum and, again, we are going to fund that. But if by the third year the school is still failing, we are going to say to the parent: All right, you have the right to do something with your children to try to improve their education because it is very obvious that you are not getting the benefit you need as a result of the way the school is functioning.

Unfortunately, I would like to have accelerated that so it would happen in the second year, but the agreement is that in the third year if a child is in a failing school that has failed for 3 years, the parent will have the right to get that child supplemental assistance outside the school system so that if that child is failing in reading or that child is failing in math, the parent, at the parent's option, will be able to take their child and get additional assistance for that child after school or maybe during recess time, however the school wants to set it up, so that that child can go away from the school to a Sylvan Learning Center, to another public school or to a private parochial school for the purposes of getting remedial assistance in the academic area where the child needs help.

The child still remains a pupil in the public school system. This is not an option of leaving the public school system and going into a private school system. Rather, this is an option of allowing the parent to get supplemental assistance for that child and allow the

child to have the assistance he or she needs in order to bring the child up to speed because he or she has been in this failing school now for at least 3 years—they may have been in it longer—and they are way behind. Under most scenarios, you are going to find they are way behind. So this is an attempt to bring them back up to speed with special tutorial support.

What does this mean? For the first time it empowers the parent to do something when their child is stuck in a failing school. Who are we talking about? We are not talking about middle class parents for the most part. We are certainly not talking about wealthy parents. What we are talking about for the most part are single moms, many of them in urban societies, who have virtually no options for their children, and we are going to give that single mother an option. We are going to allow that single mother to take her child and get some assistance in math or reading.

That language has been agreed to and put in this bill. Some have called it choice. It is not a choice; it is sort of hybrid of choice. It was an idea I came up with more than 3 years ago and got consensus—in fact, so much consensus that folks on the other side are announcing it was their idea. We are happy to have many authors of it because it is a good idea. But it really is the first step in the effort to try to empower parents.

The second step is equally important. It is not in the bill, unfortunately. That is to take a few schools that we know are failing and that have failed year in and year out and say to the parents of those kids in those schools: We are going to give you a full option of choice. We are going to put the pressure on that school to perform, and if it does not perform we are going to allow you to put your child in another school, either a public school or a private school. Under this bill there is an option to take your child out and put them in a public school after being in a failing school, but there is no option to go to a private school.

Now, this is the classic choice situation. This is what we call portability. The idea is instead of having the money go to the school systems which have taken this money and produced year in and year out a failing school, to say to the parents: The money is going to go to your child; it is going to be strapped on the back of your child with a backpack, and you can take that money and your child and you can put them in a different learning climate. But when you do that, the conditions are going to be that your child has to learn. That is the only thing we are going to hold you to. Your child is going to have to start to achieve as a result of leaving that school and going to another school, whether public or private. Your child is going to have to start achieving at the level that they should have achieved to be comparable with or equal to a child in their grade

level who is in a school that is performing well.

We are going to expect academic achievement, and we are going to have accountability standards expecting academic achievement for you, the parent, having the right to take your child and the money that is supposedly supporting your child, the Federal money—and, really, we are only talking about low-income parents; we are not talking about the general population—to another school.

Now, does this idea work? Yes, it does. This idea is already being used in Milwaukee, for example, and it has been extraordinarily successful. It is being used in Arizona, and it has been successful. The fact is, there are a lot of school systems out there that are willing to pursue this type of idea.

It should be noted that we are not going to suggest that this be done unilaterally by the Federal Government or that the parent have the unilateral right to make this decision. Rather, what we are suggesting is that there be two conditions present. First, that before this option of a choice or portability is given to the parents, the local school district, the local elected public school district, must opt into the program.

You will probably say that will never happen. It will actually happen. That is what happened in Milwaukee. The local elected officials who were responsible for education decided in this case that it wasn't the school district but it was the town council that decided they wanted to give parental choice. They wanted portability. If a local elected board, which is charged with the education responsibility of the children in that school district and, therefore, has the responsibility for public education, decides that as one of the elements of its educational system it wishes to give parents of kids who are in failing schools where the school has failed for at least 3 years the option and the ability to move that child to a private school, they will have that option but only if that idea is supported by the public entity which has legal authority over the public school system.

It is not a top-down decision. It is not even a unilateral parental decision.

The second condition we have is that no title I money will be used for this exercise. This will be a new funding stream so that the portability initiative or the choice initiative—however you want to call it—will not be a drain on title I funding in the school districts but, rather, will be a separate funding stream that will be available to the community that decides to opt into this.

So as to the argument that this is going to somehow undermine the public school system, we punch a hole in that balloon by pointing out that the public school system makes the decision to go down this road. As for the argument it is going to undermine the funding mechanisms for title I kids, we punch a hole in that by making it clear

that the funding mechanism is independent of the title I dollars and, therefore, has no impact at all on title I.

Those two red herrings can then be set aside, although I am sure we will hear a lot about them when the amendment is offered.

The real argument is, interestingly enough, by the Washington Post, a paper with which I don't often agree, editorializing this last Saturday in favor of giving parents some options—especially low-income parents, and especially single mothers in urban communities who have no options today as a result of giving them those options and bringing competition into the school system, and it is competition that produces quality in our society, whether you choose to go to a Burger King over a McDonald's because of the competition or a McDonald's over the Burger King. In education we have no competition today. We have no force for improvement that comes from the marketplace or that comes from the pressure of having to perform in order to get clients.

This will introduce that into the system, and, most importantly, it will give hope to parents—in particular, single moms, especially in urban communities, mostly from minority districts—hope that their children will have the opportunity to live the American dream and that their children will have the opportunity to be educated.

I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator from Alabama in allowing me to go first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for his steadfast leadership on matters involving education. He has served on the Education Committee, on which I serve now, for quite a number of years. He is a champion and a visionary and a person who really cares about children and wants to improve education in America. He has been very successful in making that happen.

I had the opportunity last week to spend a day with Dr. Rod Paige, the President's Secretary of Education. Dr. Paige is an extraordinary individual. He has lived the kind of life we want to happen in America. He grew up in Monticello, MS. His parents were both educators. He played ball and coached at Jackson State. He then went on to become dean of the education school at Texas Southern, and was on the school board at Houston. Houston was looking for a new superintendent of their education system. They were troubled about how they were getting along. Things weren't going well. There are 207,000 students in that system. It is the seventh largest education system in America that had a number of children who had difficulty with the English language, with a diverse racial and socioeconomic makeup. It was a real challenge.

When he took over, only 37 percent of the students in that school system were passing the basic Texas test. He took it on with a passion that this could not continue. He had been a dean of an education school. He said: If I knew what I know now about training teachers, I would have done things a lot differently when I was dean. But he still took over that system, and it was in trouble.

He identified schools that were failing, and he did not allow it to continue. He took action on failing schools. He cracked down on discipline. He said we must have discipline. We cannot have a school system that has a reputation that it is not safe to come to it and where teachers continue to feel unsafe and where students don't feel safe. He improved discipline dramatically.

He ended social promotion—the idea of just passing children along even if they are not learning the basic requirements of that grade. He said that cannot continue.

He began a rigorous system of testing—not because he wanted to harm the children or because he wanted to pigeonhole students, but he wanted to find out diagnostically as part of the education process where they were academically.

He said quite convincingly that if a child reaches the fourth grade and they are way behind in reading and math, they probably will never catch up. You have a rare opportunity in those early grades to constrict failure and turn it around. That is what he decided to do. He did those things.

As a result, in 5 years, from 1995 to the year 2000, he nearly doubled the number of students passing that basic Houston, TX, test. It went from 37 percent to 73 percent, one percentage point below doubling that figure in just 5 years.

I think that is an extraordinary achievement. He said he was able to achieve some additional financial support, but not much really until the last year after he had proven that he could achieve success.

What he said they did was the very thing I just mentioned. They did not want to leave a child behind. How do you leave a child behind? You don't test them. You let them go by law to a school that is dysfunctional, that is not working, and that is not effective. You won't let them go to any other school in the system. They don't have money to go outside the system. You just say: Tough luck, child. We are taking care of it. We are giving that school as much money as we give the next school. But you have to go there even if it is a failing school.

Dr. Paige said we cannot do that anymore. I know the Senator from New Hampshire is a strong believer in choice. So is Dr. Paige. Most school systems, I am sure, wouldn't adopt the option that we provide them. But Houston did. Dr. Paige said: It did not hurt the public schools. It made us bet-

ter, and in fact after a period of years with our test scores going up, our success rate going up, and our discipline problem going down, the number of students coming to the public schools increased. We were drawing people from private schools. He said public schools can and will win the battle if they do the things necessary to achieve success.

I will just echo that. I taught a year. My wife taught 4 years. Our children attended public schools for most of their career. My two daughters graduated from one of the big inner-city schools in Mobile, AL. We were on the PTA and have a lot of great friends who are teachers. I have visited 25 schools in Alabama this past year.

I think I have some appreciation for what education is all about. Yes, we want to get as much money as possible for education. In fact, the Federal Government has increased federal spending on education by 50 percent since 1994.

This year's budget has an additional 11.5 percent proposed increase for education. But it is deeper than that. We have to ask ourselves: What is happening with the money we are spending? There are States that spend a lot more money than other States. There can be schools in the same town, in the same system, receiving the same amount of money per student, and one school is functioning well and maybe the another one is not.

We have to ask ourselves: What is occurring in our school systems that is not healthy? There is a legitimate concern that public policy has responded to the system. We have tried to do what the system says; and the system says, basically, we do not want testing and accountability; we just want more money. Just give us more money, and we will do better.

For the most part, schools in the United States have had increased funding per student over the last decade or more. But, unfortunately, the numbers have not gone up. The Federal Government has spent \$125 billion in trying to narrow the gap between low-income students and upper-income students, and the gap has not narrowed, it has widened in some areas.

We still have very disturbing test scores in math and science that show we are not competitive with the rest of the industrial world. I think that is so obvious as to be without dispute.

What is it we are doing wrong in education? You go to Japan, and they have classes with 50 or 60 children in a class. We have much smaller classes than that, but our numbers are not where we they need to be. So what is the problem?

I think Dr. Paige and the President's plan is focusing on a couple of core events: Do not let a child fall behind. Leave no child behind. Find out at the earliest possible time if they are not keeping up. Do what needs to be done to then intervene. Do not let parents think that just because Billy is going

to school every day, that Billy is learning at a legitimate rate and progressing effectively. Those tests will tell on the school. They will tell on the students. And the parents will be much more engaged.

Alabama has done that. My State has stepped forward. It has one of the toughest testing systems in America. It demands that students meet certain minimum standards. The students are achieving more.

Some say: I just don't like these tests mandated by the Federal Government. They direct policy in teaching and teachers have to teach to the test. But if the test is a good test, and the test determines whether or not a child can handle basic math or can read and write, and teachers are teaching to that test, I say, well done. I say that is progress.

We need good testing, developed by the States, that will test basic reading and math improvement skills. If we know that, if we are knowledgeable about whether or not they are making progress, then we can help that child get even better. If they are not making progress, we can confront it. If a teacher or school is consistently failing, and not meeting those standards, perhaps at that point we need to confront the leadership at that school. Maybe we can find better leadership and improve those test scores. Because the American taxpayer, the American citizen, is entitled to know whether or not their money is producing results. How much more basic can it be? We are talking about giving more money and having no accountability?

In the 4 years I have been in this body, I have learned that many of our friends on the other side of the aisle say: You just want to send more money to the schools without accountability. And I do want to send more money to the schools with less strings and less paperwork. I definitely believe in that. But the question is, what is accountability? What do we mean when we say "accountability"?

If you listen to many in this body, accountability is whether or not an individual school gets the money that we appropriate and that they do with it precisely what is said here. That is what they determine to be accountability. We have 700 Federal Government education programs. Can you imagine that—700? It is hard to believe.

So they say, you cannot consolidate those problems. You cannot send the money down to an elementary school that wants to revamp its entire reading program, to spend \$20,000 to develop a program that will be effective for the next decade to improve reading in their school where they have a vision and a passion for it and they just can't wait to do it. They don't have the money, and we say: No, you can't do that. You have to spend it for one of our little 700 projects.

What I have learned is—and as I have thought about it—that is a wrong view of accountability. Accountability is

having a learning curve. Are children improving? Are they better able to read now than they were last month or last year? That is what accountability is. You cannot do that without testing. Almost every school system knows that. Virtually every school system tests, although there is a fierce, dogmatic, determined group of advocates who resist testing in every shape, form, or fashion. They fight it every way possible, with every kind of possible excuse.

But I repeat again, if you love those children, if you want to see them reach the highest and best economic and social potential in the world, you want them to be able to read and write. You want them to be able to do basic math. You want them to reach the highest possible achievement in trig, in chemistry, and physics, and the highest form of mathematics in their school systems. We want them to reach their fullest potential. That will not happen if they are not progressing steadily every year.

So I believe we can do better. I believe if we focus on learning, and if we give our principals and our teachers more freedom to use the Federal resources in a way most effective for learning, they will use it that way. If we say: You will get even more freedom if your test scores improve, such as they did in Houston, the children will benefit from that additional freedom. I assure you, the local people will be more willing to support a school that is showing progress than one that is not showing progress.

I will share this story. There is a principal in Alabama named Dorothy Robinson. A number of years ago, she was a teacher in a rural school in the county in which I grew up. She also grew up there and taught in Packer's Bend. We call it "across the river." Packer's Bend was an isolated area across the river from the main part of the county. They had a small school, and it was in big trouble. Test scores were not good. The school was not in good shape. The county was about to close it. They said they would.

Dorothy Robinson said: Don't close it. Give me a chance. I believe I can turn this school around. It was on academic alert by the State. It was the smallest high school in the State. She started that summer, got students together, and they helped clean up the school. They got parents involved to an extraordinary degree. She called her teachers together, and they decided they could improve test scores. They were going to do the things necessary to make that school be an effective educational institution. She worked at it, and was highly successful; and 4 years later they were running test scores as high as any in the county.

It was a really tremendous achievement done without any great appropriation of money, done by leadership and a determination to hold students accountable. She challenged them to be their very best. She did not put up

with excuses. And she moved them forward. In fact, the superintendent of education in Alabama has now hired her to help him set up programs for similar schools throughout the State.

Those kinds of improvements are happening in America. We need—as a Senate, as a Congress, and as a U.S. Government—to develop policies that help those success stories occur more often. We need to help them decide what to do fundamentally; and that is, to find out whether children are learning properly and to give those schools more freedom and flexibility to do that. If the schools continue to fail to teach our children, we need to give those children some option to reach outside that school. Because it is wrong; it is not right at its most fundamental level, to say to a poor child who has no other option but to go to public school: You must go to this failing school. You just go there anyway.

This is what we do in American today mostly. The President is saying, if you can't get your school operating at the basic level, give them some options, give them some choices. But fundamentally, if we do the things Dr. Paige did in Houston, if we do the things Ms. Dorothy Robinson did at Packer's Bend, every school can move to the highest possible level. We can without any doubt substantially improve the learning of children all over this Nation without any tremendous increase in funding. It can be one of the greatest things this Nation has ever done, not to leave a child behind, make sure every one is progressing to their fullest potential.

We can do this. I am excited about it. The President was a Governor of a large State. He ran for Governor promising to do something about education. He achieved some great improvements in Texas education, and he wants to do it for America. It is not a pipe dream, it is a vision that can be achieved and made a reality. I hope this Congress will not just continue business as usual, not just continue to function as an arm of the establishment, but that we will confront our failure to come up with innovative solutions for improvement and to increase substantially the learning that occurs in classrooms in America, those magic moments when a child and teacher gel and they learn. It is a thrilling thing. We need to further that and not the bureaucracy.

I look forward to the continued debate on this. It is time to bring this bill up and make some changes for the better in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I begin by complimenting the Senator from Alabama and before him the Senator from New Hampshire, both of whom made extraordinarily important points about the need for improvement in our education in the United States and about the single ingredient that can do more to enhance their performance than any

other single thing; that is, more choice, more freedom in our education system, choice for parents so that their kids have a chance, and freedom of local schools to experiment and to do what is in the best interest of the kids in their local communities rather than having policies dictated from Washington, DC.

In starting this process, I had very high hopes that we would be considering legislation in this Chamber that embodied this concept of choice, of more freedom for parents and students to go to the schools that were succeeding rather than being relegated to the poorer schools that characterize all too many of our communities today. I had hoped we would be able to pass and enact legislation that embodied an entirely new approach to education in our country.

Sadly, I no longer have those hopes because the bill that came to us from the committee to the floor is a bill which does not embody all of the President's ideas as he put forth. It is, in effect, the lowest common denominator, a bill that represents the consensus of all of those people who had anything to do with it and, as a result, instead of embodying those new principles, those principles of reform, relies far too heavily on the ideas of the past, the old model of Federal education which assumed that improvement in student performance could be secured through bureaucratic initiative alone. The old model ensured that when policy details were hammered out, there was a seat at the table for any special interest with a vested interest in existing arrangements but literally no voice for students and parents.

Of course, the old education model was built on the premise that Congress' commitment to expanding opportunities to the disadvantaged, as well as to overall academic excellence, could be measured primarily by how many taxpayer dollars were spent. I believe we need a new model, and we should begin by recognizing that if we want to see revolutionary improvement in education, we will need to consider the benefits of a system that is more dynamic than the monopoly model in place today.

An old rancher friend of mine told me, if you want to get out of a hole, the first thing you have to do is stop digging. The hole that our educational system is in today means that we have to stop making it worse by continuing the same policies. The only way we are going to improve is if we allow freedom and choice of the local communities and the parents to do what they think is best for their kids and for their students.

We have to begin by declaring independence from special interests. In covering other areas of public policy, the news media constantly insinuate that politicians are putting the well-being of the special interests that help their campaigns ahead of the consumers' well-being. That pretty well sums up

the relationship between many politicians and the defenders of the status quo in education. We need a debate about the premise that more spending equals better results in education before we pass legislation influenced by that premise.

In fact, the history of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act makes it clear that spending more taxpayers' money does not buy better results. As an alternative hypothesis, I submit we will improve education to the extent that we provide more freedom for families to obtain the kind of education they know is best for their children. I hope we will legislate accordingly.

Let's look at the state of elementary and secondary education in our country today. America is not educating a workforce that meets the needs of the 21st century, let alone the needs of each student. Last year Congress authorized the issuance of 297,500 new visas for highly skilled temporary workers to come to our country, and we had just raised the ceiling 2 years before. The reason? Not enough qualified American workers were available to fill the jobs in the new American economy. This situation is not likely to reverse itself based upon current trends.

The results from the third international mathematics and science study show that American high school seniors rank 19 out of 21 industrialized countries in math and 16 out of 21 nations in science. Over the past decade, the number of college degrees earned overall has increased by 25 percent, but the number earned in the fields at the heart of the new economy—engineering, computer science, and things of that sort—has grown by only 1 percent.

Moreover, too many people are being left behind in our education system: 37 percent of fourth graders test at the so-called below basic level in reading. That means essentially they are illiterate. For Hispanic fourth graders the proportion is 58 percent. For African American youngsters it is 63 percent. That is unacceptable. Only a third of all fourth graders have attained proficiency in reading. Since 1983, over 10 million Americans have reached the 12th grade without having learned to read at a basic level. Over 20 million have reached their senior year unable to do basic math.

As President Bush has repeatedly noted, too many of America's most disadvantaged youngsters pass through public schools without receiving an adequate education. The President has correctly identified these shortchanged young Americans as victims of the soft bigotry of low expectations.

For some the response to these problems will be to call for more money. I might note that Republican majorities in the Congress have provided more money; for example, a record increase of 18 percent last year. We will see even bigger increases this year given the priority President Bush has placed on

this in his budget. But simply spending more money on schools and school personnel has not produced educational improvements.

Since 1965, real per pupil expenditures have increased from less than \$3,000 to more than \$7,000. During the same period, reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress have been static. So we have well more than doubled the spending per pupil on education, and we have no improvement in the test scores. Between 1960 and 1995, average class size fell from 25.8 to 17.3. Inflation-adjusted average salaries for U.S. public school teachers grew 45 percent from 1960 to 1995. Over that same period, SAT scores plummeted.

As Secretary of Education Ron Paige has noted:

After spending \$125 billion over 25 years, we have virtually nothing to show for it.

Education special interests and the politicians who represent them have lost the battle. Their last resort is to say we are not spending enough money. But we don't need a bidding war. What we need are reforms that will bring results.

President Bush's original plan contained a number of worthwhile reforms in existing education programs. It called for cutting Federal redtape while bolstering accountability through meaningful assessments.

In addition to its accountability provisions, that plan contained a modest school choice provision. To the President's great credit, the Bush blueprint recognized that competitive pressure, and the threat of it, is essential to triggering the meaningful accountability that can spur improvement. That is the insight upon which we should be building.

We know that the benefits of education freedom are real and they are dramatic. One talented researcher, Harvard's Caroline Hoxby, has found that expanding choice raises the demand for teachers with initiative and strong academic backgrounds. Currently, these are the teachers most likely to leave the profession.

Professor Hoxby also found that when families are given a real choice of schools—as, for example, they have been in Cleveland and Milwaukee—significant improvements in test scores, graduation rates, and future incomes are registered by the students who leave their old schools and by those who stay because those schools have responded to the challenge of competition and have improved accordingly.

Unfortunately, efforts to ally public policy with an agenda of promoting freedom in education have had only limited success. I am very proud that Arizona was ranked No. 1 last year on the Manhattan Institute's Education Freedom Index, which ranked all 50 States. My State's reforms, for example, have led the way with the type of reforms I think we need at the Federal level, including the most liberal charter school law in the country, a law

that has led to the opening of more than 400 charter schools in Arizona, which is about a third of all the charter schools in the country; open enrollment, which allows parents to enroll children in any public school and has the funds to follow the student; finally, an idea I plan to propose as a Federal policy—a tax credit that offsets contributions Arizona families make to organizations that help give students the opportunity to attend a school of their choice.

This tax credit proposal builds on an idea that has already taken off, thanks to private philanthropists. In 1997, two distinguished business leaders, Ted Forstmann and John Walton, invited applications for 1,000 partial tuition scholarships for families in the District of Columbia. Nearly 8,000 applications were received. In 1998, they formed an organization called the Children's Scholarship Fund to apply the idea on a national basis. They planned to offer 40,000 scholarships, and 1.25 million applications were received.

This is an idea whose time has come. It is a concept Americans embrace. As impressive as these numbers are, these testimonials were offered by parents who have been pleading for better options.

One mother said the following about her experience:

We would not be able to afford this without your help. Our daughter is really excited to be learning spelling and grammar (which was not being taught in public school). She's an aspiring writer and thinks this is great. My son has autism, and his new school had more services in place for him on the first day of school—without me even asking—than we've been able to pull out of the public school in six years! They both love their new schools and are doing well.

Here's another mother's testimony:

I am so excited that my son has been chosen to receive a scholarship . . . One evening I sat on my bed and cried because I really wanted him to attend a private school but I know that I cannot afford all of the tuition. Therefore your scholarship fund was my only hope.

Yet another mother wrote,

I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for this opportunity to send my children to a private school. As a low-income mother of four wonderful children with great potential, I would not be able to provide this change for them without your help.

This particular mother goes on to say,

I have chosen a school that will help nurture the seeds of greatness in them. I am sure that with this opportunity to succeed, my children will be successful and contribute greatly to society in the future.

In 1997, leaders in my state settled on a plan to help the private sector to satisfy that vast unmet demand for options.

They instituted a state credit that allows Arizona residents to claim a dollar-for-dollar income tax credit for donations to school tuition organizations—like the Children's Scholarship Fund.

Thanks to that program, 4,000 Arizona students—nearly all of them from

disadvantaged backgrounds—have received scholarship assistance that has made it possible for them to enroll in a school of their choice.

The number of organizations offering scholarships in the state has shot up from two to 33.

Arizona's leaders understand the need for adequate resources for education.

Last fall, Arizona voted to spend an additional \$438 million on education.

But first they laid the predicate to ensure that the money would be well-spend by reforming the system.

We should do the same.

If we define success as success in sending more of taxpayers' money to sustain a system that cannot improve and will not change, we may do great things for the buildings and personnel involved in education, but we will have left behind the children.

We should be judged by our willingness to make changes that promote innovation, competition, and parental choice—in short, freedom.

Those are the changes that will ensure no child is left behind.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask, of the hour I have, I be allowed to take 10 minutes as in morning business to introduce a bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 805 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. WELLSTONE. Perhaps the best way to talk about this legislation and why I have been opposed to the way we are proceeding, is to do two things. I will start by reading. I don't want to plagiarize. I was a teacher.

I say to my colleague from Rhode Island, I can be relatively brief and do this in 15 or 20 minutes—is that not brief? I was a teacher; that, for me, is brief. I know Senator REED from Rhode Island has come to the floor.

I will speak about what we are and are not doing in this legislation, first of all, by quoting Jonathan Kozol. Jonathan Kozol has unbelievable credibility because this man has written some of the most eloquent and powerful books ever written about children and education. I don't think there is any question about it. It is what the book reviewers say. It is what people in education say. Jonathan's first book was called "Death at an Early Age" and was about him having lost his job as a teacher in Boston for assigning a poem by Langston Hughes because the children were all African American, and he wanted them to know about Langston Hughes.

He has written so many books. I will quote some of what Jonathan Kozol has had to say about this legislation and where we are heading. His words are better.

He starts out:

Standardized tests in the third grade measure 7 years of learning for privileged children, but only 4 years for lower income kids who got no Head Start opportunity.

Think about that for a moment. In other words, the wealthiest children typically receive 3 years of rich developmental preschool education at an average cost of about \$15,000 a year, while half of the eligible children of poverty don't even get one year of Head Start.

And in the poorest areas, as Jonathan's last two books have been about the PS 30 school in the South Bronx, 75 percent of the children, not one of whom comes from a family with an income of over \$10,000 a year, are excluded from Head Start. So any standardized tests given in the third grade is not a test of "school's success." "It is a test of wealth or poverty. A third grade test for children whom we rob of Head Start is not school reform but punitive hypocrisy."

Those are the words of Jonathan Kozol. Believe me, I wish they were my words. I agree with them. That is why I come to the floor and state I could not believe I heard some colleagues on the other side talking about how, if the schools do not succeed after 1 or 2 or 3 years, then there will be severe consequences, and on and on and on. I will say it again. Some of the harshest critics of these teachers in these schools could not last 1 hour in the classrooms they condemn. But at age 8, let us be clear about this, for these third graders, this is not a test of school success. It is a question of which kids by age 8 had rich prekindergarten education—which kids were able to come to school ready to learn. How many children were challenged, nurtured, and all of the rest. So basically you have one group of kids who had it all. You had another group of kids who did not even have a chance to be in Head Start because we fund Head Start at 50 percent of what is needed for 4-year-olds even less for three year olds and only 3 percent of what is needed for 1 and 2-year-olds. And the Head Start program is to do what—to give children from disadvantaged backgrounds a head start.

Jonathan's conclusion: A third grade test for children or for the school, which is also supposed to be a reflection of how the teachers do, is not school reform but "punitive hypocrisy."

I will offer an amendment that will say that we will not mandate these tests in every school, in every district, in every State until we fully fund title I.

Another amendment is going to be we should not do it until we fully fund Head Start. I will be interested to see how colleagues vote.

Jonathan Kozol goes on and says—"and, please, this is my battle cry. This is my plea. This is my prayer." He says: "Nationally enforced testing with no national guarantee of equal opportunity to pass the test is ethically unjust." I would like to see a Senator come out here and argue with me on

that. So you have school funding for pupils in the poorest school districts of America that range around \$6,000 per child, and you have school districts in the richest communities that range in the area of about \$24,000 per child. In New York City, poor kids in the Bronx last year got \$8,000 to pay for their education while children in the wealthy suburbs got \$18,000 to \$20,000. Teachers in the richest districts got \$20,000 more in annual pay than New York City teachers.

So the White House bill will test the poor against the rich and then announce that the poor are failing. Federally required tests without federally required equity amounts to clubbing these children over the head after systematically cheating them. I want to say this in this Chamber because that is exactly what we are doing. That is exactly what we are doing. We know in advance which kids will fail. So this is a plan not for reform, not for equality, but for guaranteed humiliation children.

I am sorry, I know where "leave no child behind" comes from. That is the mission statement of the Children's Defense Fund. I heard a colleague—I will not use names because we are not supposed to be personal—come to the floor and say the money is not the answer. We need to give the children tools to do well. And then this colleague jumped to talk about the tests. Does the test assure a good teacher? Does the test assure that we are going to be paying teachers well so we have good teachers? Does the test assure a smaller class? Is the test the tool that brings about the technology in the schools or the good textbooks? Does a test rebuild a crumbling school building? Does the test assure that the children come to kindergarten ready to learn? The test does not assure any of that.

We cheat these children. We do not even fully fund Head Start, and then we fail them and club them over the head and we call this reform. I want nothing to do with this unless we are going to have an honest commitment of resources.

My friend Jonathan Kozol goes on to say that the testing advocates assume that teachers are afraid—I have heard some of this discussion—to be held accountable. He says this is a liability against the future. And he is right. No good teacher—I have two children who teach. I am a proud Jewish father. I think they are great teachers—No good teacher is afraid to be held accountable for what she does or what he does with children, but it is manifestly unfair to ask accountability from teachers when the Congress is unwilling to be held accountable for its behavior in short-changing kids and basically cheating them from the hour of their birth, and then clubbing them over the head with a punitive exam.

Senators should be ashamed to go along with this.

Now, I am going to make one other point from Kozol, although I could go

on and on. This excessive testing is degrading and it is distorting instruction. Teachers, and I quote from Kozol, are turning to robotic drill and grill routines because they are terrified of sanctions—loss of funding—if their student scores are not high enough. And this mandate from the Federal Government, an unfunded mandate, is going to require every school and every school district, every child from age 8 every year to be tested. And what is going to happen is the teachers are not going to be able to encourage the students to have questions. They are not going to be able to encourage curiosity or humor or delight of any kind. All those trips to the museum and all that art and all that music and all of those other activities, they will go by the wayside as everybody will be drill teaching to drill tests. And this passes for reform?

I wish there were more colleagues present so they could get angry at me. I think people in these school districts, people down in the trenches think we are crazy. I go to a school about every 2 weeks and I do not find people coming up to me, whether it is in rural or whether it is suburban or inner city, saying we need more tests. I have people come up to me and say: God, we need more teachers, or we need more counselors; we need affordable housing because our third graders are moving three and four times during the year and it is hard for them to do well in school.

It is hard when the children come to school hungry. It is hard when they come to school with an abscessed tooth because they do not have any dental care and can't afford it. We need after-school programs. Why can't you invest in Head Start, child care, and make sure the kids are kindergarten ready. We need smaller class sizes. Our buildings are dilapidated. I wonder how U.S. Senators would do if the toilets didn't work, or if it was cold during the winter, or there was no air conditioning, or we didn't have access to the fax, or we didn't have the books we needed, and we didn't have adequate facilities. How would we do as Senators?

A lot of children are having to learn under these conditions.

That is what I hear about. I do not hear people coming up to me saying: Please, Federal Government. Mandate that we have tests every year.

But this is what we call reform.

Then, to add insult to injury, the estimates that we are getting from our States is, wait a minute; to do the testing the right way, if there is a right way, is going to cost at a minimum over \$2 billion. Some estimates are as high as \$7 billion. The White House has a few hundred million dollars for this.

Whatever happened to my Republican colleagues' outrage about unfunded mandates?

In addition, in St. Paul, MN, after you get to a school where only 65 percent of the kids are low income, or, say, 60 percent, there is no title I

money left. We fund about 30 percent of the children who can get the help.

The President is calling for a total increase of \$670 million or thereabouts because we have to have these Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax cuts with over 40 percent of the benefits going to the top 1 percent. Now we hear we are going to have several hundred billion over X number of years spent on the Pentagon. Then there will be missile defense, and all the rest.

Where are the resources?

My final point today is that I am disappointed. I said before we actually brought this bill up, and certainly before we proceed with this bill I am going to keep saying this. We should have an agreement on some of the policy questions that I know Senator REED and others are going to talk about, and also whether or not there is going to be a commitment on resources because this will just be a mockery. Senators will rue the day they voted to mandate this and made every State, every school district, every school, every kid, and every teacher go through this and they did not provide the resources for IDEA and for kids with special needs or for title I or so kids can be kindergarten ready. You will rue the day.

Democrats, my colleagues, this is not reform. You should stand up against it. If there is not a commitment—I don't mean authorization, I mean the commitment of resources, appropriations, and I mean now—we should fight this all the way. We should say to people in the country: God knows we are committed, but we are not going to let this be an unfunded mandate, where you will have to raise your property taxes.

As Jonathan Kozol said, we are not going to have a Federal mandate for testing without a Federal mandate of equal opportunity for the children to get a good education to do well.

So I will offer an amendment to title I which says that the new testing set to go into effect in the school years 2005 and 2006 shall not be required to go into effect in that year unless title I has been appropriated at \$24 billion, nor will it have to go into effect in subsequent years until such sums are necessary are appropriated to fully fund title I.

This is put up or shut up time. If you are serious about accountability, but you are equally serious about making sure children have the same opportunity, then I think you should vote for it.

There will be seven test quality amendments, which are really important so that we do this right.

I have another amendment that says the assessment should be used for diagnostic purposes only.

That is basically what we are talking about right now. That is what we should be using the tests for, diagnostic purposes. Let's not talk about using these tests to start bashing these kids over the head and these schools and teachers over the head.

Finally, a transition teaching amendment that I have been working on which will be a bipartisan effort which expands and enhances the current transition teaching program to ensure that funds are targeted to the high-poverty and high-need school districts. The program will ensure funds are used on activities that have proven effective in both recruiting and retaining teachers. This is critical because so much of the need for teachers is rooted in the high attrition rate in the field. 73% of teachers in Minnesota leave the field for reasons other than retirement.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the notes that Jonathan Kozol sent to me be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Standardized tests in 3rd grade measure seven years of learning for privileged children, but only four years for low-income kids who got no head start opportunity.

The wealthiest children receive typically three years of rich developmental preschool, at average cost of \$15,000 a year, while half the eligible children of poverty get not even one year of Head Start and, in the poorest urban areas, 75 percent are excluded from Head Start.

Any standardized test given in 3rd grade, therefore, is not a test of "school success"—it is a test of wealth or poverty. A 3rd grade test for children whom we rob of Head Start is not "School Reform" but punitive hypocrisy.

Nationally enforced testing with no national guarantee of equal opportunity to pass the tests is ethically unjust. School funding per-pupil ranges from \$6,000 in the poorest districts of America to \$24,000 in the richest. In the New York City area: poor kids in the Bronx last year got \$8,000 while children in the wealthy suburbs got \$18,000 to \$20,000. And incidentally teachers in the richest districts get \$20,000 more in annual pay than NYC teachers.

The White House bill will test the poor against the rich—and then announce "The poor are failing." Federally required tests without federally required equity amounts to clubbing children over the head after systematically cheating them.

We know in advance which kids will fail. So this is a plan, not for reform, not for equality, but for guaranteed humiliation of our victims.

We will learn nothing from another layer of tests that we do not already know. Kids in the Bronx, for example, already take six standardized exams beginning in 3rd grade: three sets of tests in math and reading each, year after year.

These tests, according to the principal of P.S.30, take up one quarter of the year. Twenty-five percent of teaching time is lost to tests, pre-tests, and test preparation.

In other words, one-fourth of the school budget is already being wasted by repetitive exams. Another set of tests will simply waste more money. Every week devoted to a test is a week of lost education.

Some of my colleagues in the Senate are under the impression that "tests" represent a "form" of education. They do not! Tests do not teach reading: Only well-paid teachers in small classes do. "Testing" is a symbolic substitute for "educating." Don't substitute a symbol for the real thing.

Kids who are cheated of Head Start, Title I, small classes, and well-paid teachers learn absolutely nothing from a national exam ex-

cept how much their nation wants to punish and embarrass them.

Standardized tests are the worst kind of tests, but these are inevitably the ones the White House will require, because they are the easiest to compare numerically.

Many of the brightest kids can write beautifully and read perceptively but cannot regurgitate answers for a multiple-choice exam.

A friend of mine once taught to a student, a boy named Anthony from New York City. He failed every standardized exam he was given, but today is in college because his teacher took time to read his stories!

Nationally standardized exams will stereotype boys like Anthony as "failures" and convince them to drop out of school before we even recognize their gifts. No standardized exam will ever identify the true potential of a gifted child—only his "test-taking savvy." We'll lose too many kids as a result.

Standardized exams will also take the highest toll on poor black and Latino kids.

The most poorly funded urban districts are overwhelmingly black and Hispanic. Giving more tests, instead of more opportunity, will simply drive more minority children out of school and push larger numbers of black adolescents into the streets—then into the prison system.

New York already spends 10 times as much to incarcerate a child in juvenile prison (nearly \$90,000) as to educate that child in public school. In California, prison guards get higher salaries than teachers. Testing without educational equality will increase the prison population while it demoralizes and stigmatizes kids of color.

Testing advocates also assume that teachers are afraid to be held "accountable." This is a libel against teachers.

No good teacher is afraid to be held accountable for what she does each day with children.

But it is manifestly unfair to ask "accountability" from teachers when Congress is itself unwilling to be held accountable for its perfidious behavior in short-changing kids to start with—cheating them from the hour of their birth—then clubbing them over the head with one more frankly punitive exam.

"One-way accountability" is unacceptable. Senators, we should be ashamed to go along with this.

Excessive testing is already degrading and distorting instruction. Teachers are turning to robotic "drill-and-grill" routines because they're terrified of "sanctions" (loss of funding) if their students' scores aren't high enough. The White House plan will make this even worse.

Teachers are increasingly afraid to encourage questions, curiosity, humor, or delight of any kind during the school day because they're being told that every minute must be calibrated to an item that may be on an exam.

Urban schools, as a result, are being turned into pedagogic bootcamps in which children lose not only equal opportunity but also all the joy and sweetness that should be a part of childhood. In this way, we rob the poorest kids twice.

And it seems that the best teachers hate the testing agenda most. They will not remain in public schools if they are forced to be drill-sergeants for exams instead of educators. Hundreds of the most exciting and beautifully educated teachers are already fleeing from inner-city schools in order to escape what one brilliant young teacher (a graduate of Swarthmore) calls "Examination Hell."

The dreariest and most robotic teachers will remain. The glowing and passionate teachers will get out as fast as they can.

Who will you find to replace these beautiful young teachers?

This is another way of robbing urban and poor rural children of the opportunities that Senators give their own kids.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I yield such time to the Senator from Rhode Island as he requires. I will reserve the remainder of my time, if there is any, for parliamentary remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I thank Senator WELLSTONE for his articulate and very passionate discussion of the issues today. I, too, am concerned that we are moving forward on legislation that has not yet been finalized. Technically, we voted this morning to proceed to S. 1, this piece of legislation. But we recognize and understand that this piece of legislation, the committee print, has already been overtaken by events and negotiations, and that what we will ultimately be confronted with on the floor is still being written.

When there are so many important and outstanding issues that have yet to be resolved, it is, indeed, premature and, I think, unfortunate that we would begin this debate.

S. 1, the committee bill, was carefully and thoughtfully considered in committee, and it represents accommodation between the administration's proposal and the ideas of the committee members in both Republican and Democrat caucuses. I hoped it would come to the floor as the vehicle by which we could discuss educational reform in the United States. But as I indicated, this has been overtaken. The few hundred or so pages, for all practical purposes, are irrelevant.

What is being discussed today is how we will deviate from the agreed-upon committee print. That committee product represented a balancing of several important principles.

First, there was the principle of enhanced accountability, the principle that I recognized, indeed, in the last ESEA reauthorization in 1994 and fought strenuously for to increase accountability, recognizing that unless we had agreed-upon educational standards and ways to evaluate those standards, we were not going to make significant educational progress in the United States.

The second principle is flexibility, to give the States more discretion and authority to ensure that their plans are developed, carried out, and evaluated.

The third principle is increased resources, because without adequate resources, testing and flexibility will lead, in my view, to very little progress, and may be even detrimental, as my colleague from Minnesota suggested.

But today we still do not have a resolution of the funding. We have an agreed-upon authorization number in this bill. But we have not seen the administration come forward and pledge the same kind of resources that they

are about to announce for the Department of Defense and for other areas.

If this is truly the No. 1 domestic priority in the United States—the education of our young people—then we can put our money where our mouth is; we can put the resources to work. To date, we have no real resolution. So, we are in danger of having a testing scheme and flexibility but without the resources to make it all work.

But in addition to that issue, there is still the issue to be resolved in terms of accountability. What I think we would all concede is a tough accountability standard within this legislation is now being watered down and diluted because, frankly, it has suddenly dawned on many people, particularly the State education officials and Governors, that real accountability costs money, and not just Federal money.

When we really measure the progress of education and the progress of individual schools throughout this country, and we commit to making these schools all successful, we are not just talking about some extra Federal dollars, we are talking about a profound shift in spending at the State and local levels, to make sure that truly no child is left behind. So it comes as no surprise to me that suddenly, having figured it out, the States are very concerned about accountability.

So you have three major issues which form the core, the foundation of this legislation, that are now in flux subject to continuing negotiation. In that context, I believe it is inappropriate to proceed. That is why I voted this morning not to proceed to the bill, so we could wait until we have real language we can talk about, debate, and study before we consider the bill in the Chamber. We should wait until we have real resources committed—not just reauthorization language but a real commitment to appropriations. When we do those things, then I think we are ready to move forward. But we have, in any case, taken up this debate.

We have seen over the last several weeks and months an attempt to work on a bipartisan basis to develop legislation, understanding that when we came to the Chamber more controversial elements would be introduced, such as the Straight A's Program, which is essentially a block grant for the States rather than categorical programs. There would be discussions on school vouchers and charitable choice. We understood that those issues would be debated in this Chamber. But the assumption was at least we would start with the language we had worked on, the language we agreed upon, the language in the committee proposal of S. 1. That, again, seems to be overtaken by events, overtaken by pending negotiations, and, as a result, rendering this particular version of the legislation obsolete as we begin.

We have seen in these negotiations language on some of the controversial elements, but we have not seen a resolution yet. For example, with regard to

Straight A's, this is a proposal that essentially would provide a block grant to the States to operate the educational programs without regard to the categorical provisions of existing programs.

One of the problems of the Straight A's proposal is that it is not yet clear whether States participating in this program on an experimental basis could use Federal resources for vouchers. I think that is an important point that should be resolved before we consider it in this Chamber, not hurried in while we are still in the midst of the debate.

Also, there are additional problems we have. It is not quite clear whether key provisions with respect to title I will still be part of the Straight A's Program if the State is operating under one of these pilot programs.

One of the provisions that is particularly important is parental involvement. In the 1994 ESEA reauthorization, in title I, we understood that parents were a critical aspect of education. But the existing title I law before that was merely suggestive of parental involvement. So in 1994, we put in real requirements for parental involvement, authorizing the States to use a certain amount of their title I moneys—in fact, we directed them to use it for parental involvement, to develop parental involvement plans.

I believe the title I moneys, the title I program, should be infused with parental involvement. But as the current draft of the Straight A's seems to suggest, they are going back, prior to 1994, and making parental involvement simply something that might be done, could be done, should be done. I think we know enough about the role of parents in education to make this an important part of education, not simply an optional provision of educational policy in the United States.

As I mentioned before, there still is this issue of accountability. What will be the standards? Who will set the standards? It is clear that there will be increased testing. This testing raises significant questions. Most of the States, if not all the States, engage in rather elaborate testing already. Most of the States are acting under the provisions of Goals 2000.

The 1994 ESEA reauthorization embarked on a very elaborate process of setting State standards: What a child should know, developing evaluations so those standards are tested, and imposing a scheme of evaluations—not every year for every child, but a scheme that made sense to a particular State.

Now we are saying, no, one size does fit all for every child, every year, for grades 3 through 8. That puts a lot of practical pressure on the States because if you are trying to harmonize your standards with your evaluation, it takes time. Some States have found out it is not practical to give a test to every child every year because the tests have to be very individualized to capture all the nuances of those standards.

My sense is—and I have talked to educational experts in the States—the sheer requirement to test every child every year for grades 3 through 8 will inexorably leave the States to adopt standardized testing which may or may not capture the standards in that particular State. So this testing regime could unwittingly move away from one of the central elements we all agree on—standards carefully thought out and evaluations that measure those standards.

In these ongoing discussions, there is also included the notion of supplemental services, the idea that in failing schools there will be money given for supplemental services. It seems to me that raises a very profound question: Are you interested in merely giving a few children this option, because given the caps on this program, all children, even in the failing schools, may not be able to realize this program? Or are you interested in fixing the schools so that not only that class of children but succeeding classes of children will enjoy excellent education in a reformed, revitalized school? It seems to me we are diverting resources from the main point, to fix our schools, giving some children access to some supplementary education alternatives. That is another issue.

Then there is the issue of charitable choice, which will come up, which raises profound issues about civil rights. What is the policy if we are going to use this approach by encouraging charities and religious groups to become more involved, more directly involved in Federal funding? Does that impose requirements on these groups to recognize civil rights laws in hiring? Does that impose requirements in the type of curricula they can use?

All of these are very difficult questions, and they have to be addressed. I believe they should have been addressed as best we could before we brought this bill to the floor.

There are some other practical issues here, too. It goes back to the overarching concern. The overarching concern is, who is going to pay for all this? It has been estimated by the National Association of State Boards of Education that testing alone of every child in grades 3 through 8 could cost between \$2.7 and \$7 billion over 4 years. That type of money is not in the appropriations language I am seeing in the President's budget. That type of commitment is certainly not there. And that is just for testing alone. That is just to diagnose the problem.

But we all recognize that simply identifying children who are falling behind and schools that are falling behind is just the first step, the hardest step of fixing the problem.

As my colleague from Minnesota pointed out, we hear time and time again money is not the problem. Well, it is a refrain we seldom hear from other departments when they come in and say they have to confront new issues, new changing forces in the

world. The classic example is the problem with defense. We are all reading this week that it is likely the Secretary of Defense will recommend an increase of \$25 billion a year in defense spending to adjust to new threats, new technologies, new opportunities. I am not hearing anyone say to him: Money is not the problem. Reorganize, evaluate your forces better.

Resources is not the sole answer, but it is an important part of dealing with the issue. So we have to do that.

Again, we are not seeing that type of commitment, that real commitment. Without that real commitment, we will not be able to attract the kind of teachers we need; we will not be able to provide continuous professional development so that teachers stay current on teaching techniques; we will not be able to fix school buildings so that children believe they are going to a place that is held in esteem by their community, a place that is treasured enough so that it is maintained. If you go to the schools in many parts of this country today, you find they are decrepit, that they are obsolete. They are places that no one would go voluntarily and certainly no one would go with the sense of excitement and joy that every child should bring to school. We will need more money to fix those schools.

We are going to proceed on this debate. One of the presumptions of this debate, for those who are suggesting that we engage in a regime of testing without adequate resources—one of the presumptions is the sense that our schools are failing America. There is another perspective. The perspective is that this Congress and preceding Congresses, State Governors, and State assemblies have for years and years been failing our schools. We have not been giving them the resources they need. We have not been recognizing that educational problems today, in many cases, result from problems of health care for children, problems of poverty for children, problems of housing for children. Until we recognize these issues and until we confront these issues, not just rhetorically but, more importantly, with real resources and a real commitment, to say that our schools are failing America is missing a much larger point.

What have we done truly to give these embattled teachers and students, these difficult schools, the help they need to succeed, not just a mandate to test and evaluate, but the support so that every child goes to school ready to learn? That was the first core principle of our reform movement, which President Bush's father began a decade or more ago.

There are still too many children going to school without adequate health care, coming from homes that are dangerous because of exposure to lead in paint on the walls. There are still too many children who will fail because they don't have these types of supports and these types of help. As we

consider this bill, we have to recognize that group as well.

There are many things that will be debated in the course of the next few days in terms of education reform. I hope we can debate and I hope we can successfully adopt provisions that will decrease the size of classrooms throughout the country, knowing that children perform better when they have a smaller ratio between the teachers and the students. I hope we improve the quality of the physical condition of our schools—better classrooms, modern classrooms, and safer schools. I hope we can improve the quality of our teachers and principals by providing real professional development. I hope we can improve our school libraries, and add additional school counselors. If we can do that, then we can take this legislation and make a real contribution to the quality of education in the United States.

I hope we can do that. I hope we can do that on behalf of the thousands and thousands of youngsters who are going to school today and the generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time from 4:15 to 6:15 be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees for postcloture debate. Further, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CARPER be recognized first for up to 15 minutes, to be followed by Senator ENZI for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, my grandparents were born around the beginning of the 20th century and lived for much of the 20th century. In the early part of the last century, my grandparents and their generation—actually my parents and their generation—were able to find jobs and become employed not so much because of the strength of their minds but because of the strength of their backs.

As we moved throughout the 20th century, the time came when more and more it was important that we knew how to read and how to write, knew how to do math and eventually to use technology, if we were going to get some of the better jobs available in our country. As we now move into the 21st century, that will be only more true.

The last century has been called by some the American century. If the 21st century is to be another American century, it is important that our young people have the kind of skills that will enable our employers to be successful in an increasingly competitive world marketplace.

I believe among the reasons we have been remarkably successful as a nation over the last century is that we have taken our core democratic values, our democratic principles, combined those with the free enterprise system, and

added to that a belief in free public education now for just about everybody in our country. Blending those disparate elements together, we ended up with an economic engine, as we close one century and walk into the next, that is, frankly, unrivaled by any other on the face of the Earth.

That was yesterday's news. The question is, How are we going to fare for the next 100 years? For the past decade or so, we have heard increasing cries of concern that too often the skills our young people are bringing out of the high schools from which they in many cases graduate are not preparing them for college, not preparing them adequately for the workforce. We have heard calls from all levels of government, particularly State and local, to do something about it.

As a Governor for the last 8 years, I know full well we have done a lot more in the States than just wring our hands and cry in anguish. We have done a great deal to try to ensure that my children and the children of the generation of kids in school with them and those to follow, when they graduate with that diploma, will really mean something. It will mean that they do know how to read and understand what they have read, that they do know how to do math—in some cases pretty complex math—they know how to use technology, they know how to think, and they are prepared to go on to be successful in college and in the world and in life.

Throughout the country over the last 7 years—maybe the last 8 years—States have been involved in adopting academic standards. What is an academic standard? It spells out in a State such as Delaware, or any other State, what we expect students to know and to be able to do, such as standards in math, science, English, social studies, and in other subject areas as well. If you look at the 49 States that have adopted standards, most of them spell out clearly what they expect their students to be able to do in math, science, English, and social studies.

In recent years, maybe a bit more than half of our States have developed tests to measure student progress in the standards in math, science, English, and social studies that those States have adopted. They give those tests usually every year. In our State, it is annually in the spring, and it is given to students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10.

Now, almost half of the States have taken the next step toward developing accountability. What is accountability? There is a lot of confusion about what is accountability. Accountability says there ought to be consequences—some positive and some maybe not so positive—for students who fall short of the mark or for those who do well or for schools or districts that fall short or do well. There ought to be accountability for parents as well and also for politicians and for educators.

As we take up the education debate in the Senate this week, we are literally trying to figure out what is the appropriate Federal role with respect to the education of our children. My boys play soccer in a YMCA rec league in Wilmington, DE. They play on a variety of fields around the city of Wilmington. One of the fields is a field that is not level. In fact, if I can use this folder as an example, about half of the game they are running downhill on this one field. Teams like to be running downhill. At the end of the first half, they switch and they have to go in the other direction. The team running downhill for the first half ends up having to run uphill for the rest of the game.

A lot of kids in life don't have the luxury of changing sides of the field. For a lot of their lives, they play the game running uphill. The role of the Federal Government, for kids who spend a whole lot of their lives running uphill, is to try to level that playing field a little bit. For the kids born in tough situations, maybe with parents not engaged in their lives, or who don't value education, or maybe they don't even have parents, we must make sure those kids aren't hopelessly behind when they walk into kindergarten at age 5. If they are hopelessly behind and are coming from a real difficult situation in their home lives, they may need help to catch up with their other classmates.

I don't think anybody in Washington expects the Federal Government to be the primary funder or mover and shaker in education in America. That is not our role. Our role is to try to level the playing field and to help ensure that States adopt academic standards for their students, and that not just some kids have a chance to meet the rigorous standards but that all kids have a chance to meet the standards their States have adopted.

As we debate this issue this week, and perhaps next week as well, we are trying to figure out what can we do that is helpful, that builds on the reforms being adopted and implemented in the States. It does no harm; in fact, it does a lot of good.

We have to consider that between 0 and age 5, kids will learn about half of what they know in their lives. If we waste the first 5 years, it is tough to get them back. We know that there is a lot more we can do in terms of parent training. A lot could be done in our States with respect to ensuring that healthier babies are born and raised. We can try to provide assistance with respect to quality child care and programs such as Head Start and make sure kids - and parents—are given a bit of a boost at the age of 3 or 4 and find themselves better prepared to be successful at the age of 5.

Those are appropriate roles for the Federal Government. When kids walk into kindergarten at 5, what is an appropriate role? The Congress and the President have said it is to provide hope in smaller class sizes.

We have also said it is important to provide extra learning time for kids who need extra time. We are joined in the Chamber by Senator SPECTER of Pennsylvania and Senator GRAHAM from Florida. Senator SPECTER may be able to learn a little faster than the Senator from Delaware, but the Senator from Delaware can learn, too. I might just need some extra learning time.

One of the things we have done in Delaware and in other States, through programs such as title 1, is we provide extra learning time for kids who need it to reach the academic standards that have been set.

We also know that one of the best things that could happen to ensure that a kid is successful in school is to have a terrific teacher such as Mrs. Anderson, my first grade teacher, and Mrs. Swane, my fifth grade teacher—teachers who really make an impact. Mrs. Anderson helped me read at the age of 5 and 6 in my first grade class. We need teachers who love kids, who can teach and who know their stuff. One of the things that we can do at the Federal level, working with State and local school districts, is to help recruit the best and brightest to be teachers, to make sure they have the tools that will at least help them have a shot at being successful in the classroom and to ensure that their professional development continues.

Another area where the Federal Government has been involved is in technology—trying to infuse technology into public school classrooms. Delaware was the first State to wire a public school classroom for access to the Internet. I think we have the best ratio of computers to kids in the country. We spend a lot of money to train teachers to use the technology effectively in the class, to integrate technology into their curriculum, to bring the outside world into the classroom and make the learning come alive.

I am pleased that the legislation coming before us focuses, in part, on technology. One of the best things it does is to say we encourage teams in schools across America to figure out how to work at their schools, how they can incorporate technology into their curriculum. That is a perfectly appropriate role for us.

Among the other things we can do is provide some help when students are disruptive. An amendment will be offered later this week by JOHN KERRY and myself that will say if a school district wants to use some of the moneys in this legislation for establishing alternative schools for chronically disruptive students, they would have the ability to do so.

Lastly, our legislation, in providing for accountability and consequences for schools that do well and those that don't do well, says we want to put schools on sort of a 10-year glidepath to making sure that all the students are able to come closer to meeting the standards set by their States, and each

year that a school district fails to meet the State's own progress chart—imagine a stair step, if you will, of 10 steps. The first year that happens, the school gets some extra money for assistance. The second year, if they fall short, we provide more technical assistance. By the time the fourth year comes, we require that school district to institute public school choice to provide, for that child who is in a failing school, their parents an opportunity to send them to another public school that is not failing or to take advantage of extra learning time provided, in some cases, by a private vendor after school.

We say if a school is failing after 4 years, that school has to be reconstituted as a charter school or turned over to a private sector vendor to run that school or simply the school is reconstituted with a new administration and new faculty. But while we call for some serious steps in our accountability plan in this legislation to require public school choice when schools are failing children in some cases, and to require as one of three options the establishment of charter schools, transforming existing schools into charter schools, those are options that cost money.

One of the amendments that will be proposed by Senator GREGG, myself, and others is legislation saying if we are going to mandate public school choice, we need to provide assistance. If we are going to require, as one of the three options, turning a failing school into a charter school, we need to provide resources there as well.

Let me close with this point as I approach the end of my 15 minutes. I honestly believe there is more before the legislation that we will be debating this week to unite us than divide us. Most Members, including Democrats and Republicans, and I believe this President, understands the need to invest more money in programs that work to raise student achievement, targeted to kids who need the help the most. I will not quarrel whether 10 percent, 15 percent, or 20 percent increases, or more, are enough, but we all understand we need to invest more resources targeted to the kids who need it, in programs that work to raise student achievement.

The second area where we are in agreement, generally, is that the money we provide from the Federal Government should be provided flexibly. We should not try to micromanage what is going on in the schools. We should say, here is the money to use; target it for kids who need it most. You figure how to best use it in your school and school district to help your kids.

As we provide more money and we provide the money more flexibly, it is critically important we demand results, that we call for and require accountability. There have to be consequences. They do not have to be negative. There have to be consequences to make sure we are not throwing good money after bad money.

We will debate a lot of issues in this Senate Chamber this year. For my money, I think for our taxpayers' money, this is maybe one of the most important issues we will consider. It will go probably as far in determining whether we will continue to be the superpower in the world we have today 100 years from now. All the rest that we do, we can debate and decide.

I look forward to joining my colleagues in this debate, doing what is best for kids. The approach we take, I hope, is what I call the "tough love" approach, demonstrated when we took up welfare reform 5 years ago. A certain toughness in the approach was adopted and there is a lot of love and compassion, as well. There will be a similar approach. We will be successful and our children will be successful not just in this debate but in what follows. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, at the outset I commend my distinguished colleague from Delaware for his statement on the issues of flexibility and local control and accountability. In a few months in the Senate he has made a distinct contribution. It is good to share the train with the Senator from Delaware. I have done so with his distinguished colleague, Senator BIDEN, for many years. Those hours on the train enable some Members to learn more about each other and to come to bipartisan agreements on a great many of the issues. At the outset, I compliment the Senator from Delaware.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I rise today to support S. 1 and to talk about the motion to proceed on which we have gotten cloture and are now debating, with some limitations on each Senator's time, but still debating whether to proceed on debating education.

I haven't heard anybody who hasn't said that education is the most important thing on which we have to work. For a week we didn't get to debate education. Now we are only getting to debate proceeding to education. We ought to be talking about the issues and the amendments and getting a bill done and through here.

Talking to the folks back in my school districts, right now what they are concentrating on is the end of the year, graduation for seniors. Immediately after that happens, they need to be planning for next fall.

We are talking about elementary and secondary education reauthorization, which is where we outline in what programs schools can be involved. Don't you think they kind of need to know that when they start planning for fall? If they do not know by the time they start planning for fall, then they have to delay what we are talking about for a year. So it could be a year and a quarter before any of the reforms that all of us agree on can go into effect.

When I listened to the debate this morning, the discussion was over how

much money would be put in this bill. This bill is not an appropriations bill. This is an authorization bill. This is where we talk about what programs can be done. Later we talk about how much money to spend on those programs.

One of the reasons I find it particularly fascinating that the Democrats have done a little filibuster on the amount of money is that this is the first time the Republicans have been in charge when we have gotten to do a reauthorization of education. I have to tell you, we are really excited about it because there is some tremendous potential in education out there.

We are talking about the amount of money in the authorization bill. I find that particularly interesting because I went back to see how much they talked about money the last time this was authorized. The last time this was authorized the Democrats were the majority and the President was a Democrat. Do you know how much additional money they insisted be put in for the authorization of programs? No additional money. Money was not part of authorization. The Democrats have been in the reauthorizing lead for 35 years, and the amount of money has not been the issue in the authorization bills.

So what is the difference now? A little chance to pound on the Republicans and reduce the amount of civility and bipartisanship that has already been shown on this bill. That should not happen.

The plain truth is that without reform any increase would be just another drop in the \$400 million—\$400 billion; I have to start thinking in these Washington terms—a drop in the \$400 billion education bucket. If money were our answer, we would not be here today. So we did not talk about it for 35 years. We did not talk about it the last time.

The Federal Government provides 6 percent of the education dollar. We force 50 percent of the paperwork. We are the time waster generators.

So we are going to increase that a little bit. Even under most circumstances it will not get much higher than that, and that is because we do expect the States to make the major effort. That is where the people live. That has been the tradition and the method for funding education.

This is a difficult area. One of the reasons it is difficult is because everybody has been to school, so that makes each of us and everybody who listens to any debate on education an expert. We do have people in our lives who have influenced us tremendously. Some of the greatest influence we get is in that period of time we spend in school, which is some of the most contact we get with adults when we are kids.

Besides having gone to school, I also get some input from my daughter, who is a seventh grade English teacher in Gillette, WY, an outstanding English teacher. I am really pleased with the

progress she makes with her students. I get to see that firsthand and hear about it. I have to say, while she has been teaching, she has also earned two master's degrees. She just finished up the master's degree in administration so she can at some time be a principal. She would much rather be a teacher, but she has seen where a lot of the money goes.

We do need to get more money into the classroom for teachers so we can recruit and retain good teachers. My wife has a master's degree in adult education and emphasizes education quite a bit.

Some of my best mentors in my life have been people with whom I worked in the legislature who worked in education. On the State level, it is a much bigger deal than it is here because that is where the money comes from and that is where the decisions are made for the kids. Even at the State level what they do is defer the decisions, some of which we are trying to do, to the school boards themselves. That is a very important trend, and that is provided for in this bill.

We are not talking about the amount of money, although some would like to distract the discussion so it talks about the amount of money. We need to be talking about how we are going to educate our kids, how we are going to reform the process.

I do, first, want to applaud the entire committee for unanimously advancing this important bill before the full Senate. We did invest tremendous resources in attempting to reauthorize ESEA last year, and I am pleased we made it our first priority this year. I am also impressed with the support of the new administration in seeing President Bush's No. 1 priority take the next step in the legislative process. In the history of Presidential initiatives, I believe the work of this administration will serve as a model for bipartisanship on policies of national significance.

Frankly, I was stunned to hear the suggestions last week that our President has not taken any bipartisan initiatives. At both the staff and principal level, the White House has been actively engaged for weeks on negotiating this powerful education reform bill that we have before us today. I applaud the product. I thank all the parties for their investment of time, energy, and willingness to compromise—the necessary ingredients for bipartisanship without which we would not be advancing the bill today.

This is my fifth year on the Education Committee. The normal Education Committee process is to have a markup that lasts 2 to 3 weeks and then come out along party lines. This, one of the most innovative bills that we have worked on, took 2 days and it came out unanimously. That has to be a record for the Education Committee on any of the bills with which we deal. That is bipartisanship. Unanimous is about as close as you can come.

This education reform bill, the BEST Act, reflects an understanding of the variation in needs between urban, suburban, and rural schools. The bill arguably addresses the concerns of all stakeholders in our children's education, and it does so in a bipartisan way. I believe the bill has struck meaningful compromise and reflects a strong but appropriate role for the Federal partnership in elementary and secondary education.

The State of Wyoming has invested tremendous amounts of time and money in developing high standards for learning. That has been a priority for quite a while—high standards of learning, reliable assessments, strong parental involvement, and other research-based education innovations. The BEST Act builds upon that work and solidifies the shared commitment to academic achievement for all children.

The State of Wyoming also has a Web site where you can check on the grades of any of the schools. They take the testing they do and they show how well, by school, the report cards come out for those schools. So they have had strong assessments.

The State of Wyoming is currently facing a crisis in education. We call it a teacher shortage. It is not about class size. It is about teachers' salaries and a dwindling supply of qualified educators, particularly in light of the new high standards which the students must meet, which are on this Web site. But this is a problem for which the Federal Government can help provide a solution.

Under title II of our bill, the focus is not only on preparing teachers but on helping schools recruit and retain high-quality teachers. Reducing the class sizes will be an allowable use of funds under this title, if that is the unique need of the particular school.

I have to say, in Wyoming a lot of the schools have small class sizes. Even if they combined all of the classes into one class, it would be a very small class. We have some very small towns in Wyoming. It has been very important through this process to maintain the capability for those small schools to operate as well.

This bill also emphasizes the need to improve the access to education technology and to use it in the process of improving academic achievement. I like to think our State is a forerunner in that. Again, that is because of our distances. It is a way that kids who are not in our urban centers—and our biggest urban center is now 53,293 people—will still be able to get a diversified education.

The goal of eliminating the duplicative administrative application process and allowing schools to have one pot of funds for the range of technology uses, including teacher and administrative staff teaching, will make a difference. The digital divide will shrink and technology will become even more relevant as an educational tool.

I have to divert for a moment and talk about some of the innovations in technology.

About 10 days ago I happened to tour a school that deals with migrant workers. I found that they had received a grant for laptops. The laptops are assigned to these children of migrant workers, and I suspect to other workers as well. But it has all of the course work on it. It plugs into a modem that dials an 800 number to give their homework to the teacher to grade. It allows them to talk on line with the teacher. There is also an 800 phone number they can call to talk to the teacher. It is a very successful program. It was started with an old blue school bus that went around to migrant worker camps and followed the migrant workers. They gutted the bus. They put in a desk and some folding chairs. They started a school. They have progressed now to the point where they can accommodate a lot more kids using this laptop network and some teachers who can be accessible at any time the students have an opportunity for it.

There are some technological innovations out there that will help rural students and ones who move a lot. They are included in this bill.

Very importantly, the bill clarifies the purpose of the President's requirement that States expand existing assessments and take on the new practice of participating annually in the NAEP test, which is the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, which many States, including Wyoming, currently administer to students.

These clarifications go a long way in addressing the fundamental concerns by all parties that the Federal Government not enact additional unfunded mandates and that the States continue to retain the flexibility to design their own standards of learning for students versus nationalized standards or tests. We will have to debate a little bit this interaction between anything that looks like a national test and a State test which follows the things kids in that area of the country need besides their basic education.

While it is not a part of the reauthorization, we would be remiss in meeting our commitment to the education of all children if we did not also prioritize funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As we advocate meaningful education reform, I look forward to the continued support for strong increases in funding of IDEA but recognize that is part of the appropriations process and not part of the authorization process. Fully funding this important but costly Federal requirement is as critical as requiring academic success in our classrooms. It is something we have been working toward and will continue to work toward.

Throughout the consideration of the different elements of the BEST Act, I plan to discuss in more detail those that will most help Wyoming's children succeed.

In spite of increases in the Federal investment in elementary and secondary education, it does remain a fraction of the overall expenditures—less than 10 percent. I think the figure being used here is 6 percent, and also 7 percent has been used.

I remind people that 50 percent of the paperwork is generated by our very small funds. We force people to spend a lot of time for the money that comes from the Federal Government.

I had a high school principal who took a leave of absence and came back to Washington to work in my office for a semester. He spent most of that time down at the Department of Education. He had been filling out these Federal forms for what seemed to him a lifetime, and he wanted to know what happened to them.

Let me tell you what the results were. He was pleased to find out that the forms are scrutinized in detail, that every "t" has to be crossed and every "i" has to be dotted; everything has to be on the form. He was disappointed to find out that was the last use of that form. It isn't used to help any kid anywhere, but it maintains a job in the bureaucracy in Washington for that person who is making sure the form is completely filled out. That is not helping any kid in my State.

If they do not put that information together and package it somehow so it is helpful to them, we ought to eliminate the form—actually, a lot of forms. I mentioned that 50 percent of the paperwork is generated in Washington.

We have to help the schools maximize their dollars. I believe we can help improve our kids' academic experience because of this.

Planning for next year requires quick passage. I mentioned that. If we don't have quick passage, we are getting past the planning stage for the next academic year; we will be forced to have the reform kick in 1 year later.

We need to get on with this process. I hope we can have everybody get on board, end the filibuster that is in process, compromise on some time, and get the bill debated and move on to a better treatment of the kids of this country.

I look forward to seeing this bill overwhelmingly adopted by the Senate and signed into law as quickly as possible. We cannot afford to shirk our commitment to reform and putting children first.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from New York that I do have a unanimous consent request I want to offer. I believe that we will be having

some Senator from the other side of the aisle to discuss it with me briefly. It should not take too long. I thank the Senator for her courtesy in letting us do this now.

Mr. President, obviously we need to go forward with the discussion, the general debate, and the amendment process on the education reform package. Earlier today, the vote on the motion to proceed was an overwhelming 96-3. I thought that was a clear indication that we were ready to go to S. 1, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

I had the impression that we would have time spent this afternoon discussing education—not actually on the bill because time is allowed postcloture to talk about the bill in general, but that we would be able to go to the bill itself and begin debate on the bill at 6:15 or 6:30 this evening and tomorrow we would actually be into the amendment process. That seemed a fair way to proceed.

I am being told now that there is objection to us even proceeding to general debate on the bill itself. Also, I have the impression—and I am glad to see Senator DASCHLE in the Chamber; maybe he can clarify this for me—part of the reason is, Senators do not want to go to the bill and begin the amendment process until the substitute has been offered because they do not want to offer an amendment to the underlying bill and then have to offer it later to the agreed-to compromise bill. But I would be glad to ask consent or work out an agreement that any amendment that is offered before then would be applied to the compromise managers' amendment that might be offered later.

My concern, I say to Senator DASCHLE, and to Senator KENNEDY, who I see just coming into the Chamber, is that a lot of good work has been done. It has been bipartisan. The administration has been involved. It has been understandable that it took some more time. My attitude on that is, if more time is needed, let's take it. But now we are on the verge of going through a second week without actually getting on the bill.

I know a lot of Senators are going to want to speak in general debate and will have amendments to offer, and it is going to take some time. The idea that we could spend, hopefully, time tomorrow on general debate and begin the amendment process, decide how we are going to deal with perhaps amendments on Friday, and begin to make progress seemed to be a very positive thing.

So I hope we can go to the bill and begin debate on it this afternoon, tonight, and then be prepared to have more time tomorrow in general debate, if we need to, and then go to the amendments.

Before I ask consent, I will yield to Senator DASCHLE to see if we can get an agreement worked out so that if there are amendments that are offered,

they would apply to not only the underlying bill, S. 1, but to any compromise amendment that is agreed to. I did discuss that with Senator KENNEDY, and he did not think that would be a problem.

I would be glad to yield to Senator DASCHLE for a response.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I appreciate the majority leader yielding. Let me say, he has attempted to reach me earlier, and I have been tied up in important meetings. I did not know he was trying to reach me until just a few minutes ago. But I apologize for not getting back to him sooner.

Mr. LOTT. I understand. We both are running from meeting to meeting.

Mr. DASCHLE. Senator LOTT and I talked about this very question last week. I understand his desire to move to the legislation. I said I would be supportive of an effort to do that. But there are two outstanding issues. The one that we talked about last week, and continues to be a very big concern, is what kind of a commitment we can get from the administration on overall funding. I had indicated at that time when we discussed this matter last week that even though that is critical to all of us, and even though many of our colleagues believe more strongly in that than any other question, that I was prepared to move to the bill even if we had not yet completed our discussions with the administration and our Republican colleagues about that, in spite of the fact that many of our colleagues were very concerned about taking that approach.

The second issue, of course, has to do with having the language. The majority leader puts his finger on one of the concerns we have, but there are two. The first concern, of course, is what happens if you offer amendments. And, of course, that is subject then to a unanimous consent agreement that we accommodate Senators who have offered amendments in good faith. And I guess there isn't the confidence, at least right now, that we might even be able to get a unanimous consent agreement that allows Senators the confidence of knowing that even though they are amending the substitute that they have not yet seen, that it would be accommodated if ultimately we agreed to that substitute.

So I think the larger question is one that many of our colleagues have expressed to me personally, even as late as in the last half-hour, and that is that they are just uncomfortable moving to a bill for which we have not been given any information. I think a lot of our negotiators are talking back and forth, and they are attempting to resolve the outstanding differences.

The problem is that I will say at least 90 percent of our caucus has not seen even the first draft of the substitute. They are understandably concerned about committing to a motion to proceed before they have had a

chance to even look at it. I think what I made clear to the majority leader last week was that we had to at least resolve the language issue before we could make the motion to proceed.

I also supported, as 95 of my colleagues this morning did, the motion on cloture to proceed. But I am very uncomfortable asking my colleagues to accept language that they have not seen yet. I am told that we are very near this point of agreement that would then allow us to print a document that we could share with all of our colleagues and I think substantially increase the confidence levels about what it is we are agreeing to on the motion to proceed.

So I hope that our colleagues could work extra hard in the next few hours and through the night and present us with an agreed-upon substitute tomorrow that we could share with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle so that we could all vote for the motion to proceed. I think there would be a strong vote for it. But that is really the essence of my concern.

I am willing to put aside, for the moment, the funding question, even though, as I say, I cannot tell you the depth of feeling there is in our caucus about proceeding without some agreement. But I think it is very difficult for us to agree on a substitute prior to the time we have even seen it.

So I again reiterate what I thought I expressed to the majority leader was my concern last week, and that would be the reason we would have to object at this time.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could respond, Senator DASCHLE mentioned to me last week that there was a need to see the language. I passed the word that certainly that should be made available. I am surprised. While I have not been directly involved in all the negotiations, I thought that everybody was familiar with all that was going on and that basically Senator KENNEDY and others have the language, know the language, and if there is any outstanding language, they would know what that is.

So for a week we have been saying, let's share the language, and let's move on. Maybe the problem is that the language is continuing to be modified. But how long does that go on? We talk about the regular order, the legislative process. The way you usually do it is you call up a bill, and a managers' amendment is offered, amendments are offered. I do not know if we can ever get every word agreed to. I assume there are going to be Senators on both sides of the aisle who are going to offer some amendments to make further changes.

But my urging would be—on both sides of the aisle—let's give them the language. Somebody has some language somewhere. I am being assured Republicans are not hiding in the corner, holding back language that they won't share. If there is anything that Senator KENNEDY is not aware of, I am

not aware of it. I would urge that we get that language agreed to.

Mr. DASCHLE. I ask the majority leader if he would yield for just a short response?

Mr. LOTT. Sure.

Mr. DASCHLE. The majority leader is right. I think part of the language is agreed to, and I think a lot of our colleagues have seen that. But I think it is fair to say that both sides of the aisle would agree that a very significant part of this whole effort is the issue of accountability. And it is on accountability that we are still hung up, that we have this moving target. We have evolving language that still has yet to be nailed down.

Were it not for the fact that accountability is so important, I think there would be a lot more interest in trying to see if we could resolve this matter. But it is a key question. Because it is, and because this moving target seems to be one that continues to change as we go from hour to hour and day to day, that is the issue.

However, I will join with the majority leader, I would love to see both sides come together, finalize the language, and offer amendments if we are not satisfied with it.

Mr. LOTT. I have always observed in a legislative body you have to have a closer. You have to have somebody who says: This is good enough; let's go for it. We have had all of last week and now half of this week. We continue to negotiate.

I guess I will have to assume some responsibility because if I had known we were not going to be able to go to the education bill—the No. 1 priority in almost everybody's mind in the country—we could have been considering other legislation.

I have continued to hope that with one more half day, one more day, we could get going; we could have a full debate and offer amendments.

If I had known we were going to be stalled out on education, I would have gone to other issues, and maybe that is what we ought to do now. If I understand correctly, Senator DASCHLE indicates he doesn't think this idea that any amendment would be considered to be applicable to the bill or the substitute, that we might not get an agreement to do that, but would it help if we could do that?

Mr. DASCHLE. Again, that would help a good deal, but that does not solve the other problem. There are many on our side who feel so strongly about this issue of accountability that they want to be able to see the language prior to the time they are asked to vote on the motion to proceed.

I have to respect the wishes of those colleagues who have made that fact known to me. Clearly, it would help if we had that language. It would solve part of the problem.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: How much time is remaining postcloture on the motion to proceed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It will take 1 minute to calculate.

Mr. LOTT. I assume there must be 24, 25 hours remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-six hours 15 minutes.

Mr. LOTT. I guess if we run off all of that time, it would be tomorrow night or Friday before we could get to general debate on the bill. I hope we will not have to do that. Maybe there is some plan to have language available tonight for some press conference announcing that language tomorrow. Is there some indication that maybe we could go to the general debate in the morning? Do we know? I guess what I am asking is, are we going to have to run off the full 24 or 25 hours?

Mr. DASCHLE. If the majority leader will yield, that is not my expectation. As I said, both sides have been working to try to resolve the outstanding difference. I was hoping by now we would have resolved it. I was hoping we would be able to say that we now have a draft we can share with everybody. Unfortunately, that is still not the case. I can't imagine that this is going to go on much longer.

Mr. LOTT. Could I inquire of Senator DASCHLE, would it be his recommendation that we set aside education and try to go to other legislation for the balance of this week? I hate for us to let the rest of this evening, tonight, and tomorrow go without making progress on education or any other bill. If he thinks we should consider that, maybe he and I could talk after we leave here.

Mr. DASCHLE. I would be happy to talk to the majority leader about possibilities we might entertain.

Mr. LOTT. I confess, what I am trying to do is to put pressure on all parties, not just on the Democratic side or the administration, everybody. Let's come to some sort of agreement one way or the other. Let's get started.

I had planned to ask unanimous consent that we would yield back all time and proceed to the bill itself at 6:15, but it is obvious Senator DASCHLE believes now that he would be in a position to have to object, so I will not go through that exercise.

I do emphasize to all that everybody agrees we have a monumental, historic opportunity to get major education reform and increases in funds for education. I hope we can get to the bill itself within the next half a day at a very minimum.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I appreciate the dialog that just occurred between the leaders because, certainly, it is critical that the debate on education commence and that we do everything within our power to provide more resources, greater opportunities, and accountability to our children around the country.

As a new Member to this body, I am one who shares the concern about actu-

ally seeing the language of the bill and trying to be sure that we know what it is we are debating and that the people back in our States who we represent have a chance to be part of this debate by being able to read and study and provide comments about what it is we are considering in the Senate. I know it may, from time to time, be a little frustrating, but until we actually have a bill with language that will determine the future of education funding from the Federal Government for 5 to 7 years, it is a wiser course for us to be prudent and thoughtful and to wait until we actually know what it is we are debating and what the potential impact of these provisions could be on the lives of real children. After all, this debate is going to set the stage for how much or how little we as a Nation will do for elementary, junior high, middle, and high schools.

I am particularly concerned about the impact we will have on our neediest children, those who are too often left behind. We still have too many children who are not reading at grade level and who are being taught by uncertified teachers, and too many who are in overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated school buildings. I know that all of us on both sides of the aisle agree that we can do better than this. We can't just sign a blank check or decide that we can proceed on bill language we have not even seen and discharge our responsibilities to the children we represent in this body.

Many of my colleagues and I have serious concerns about the substance of the bill. For example, the block grant demonstration program, so far as we are aware of it without having seen the language of it, does not target enough funds to our highest-need districts and will mean less control for local school districts on how best to invest their Federal education dollars. Because we have not yet seen the final version of the bill we are considering, we don't know whether there is a genuine commitment to devote the resources necessary to make the promise of greater accountability a realistic outcome.

Just as we expect teachers, administrators, and students to abide by a high standard of accountability, we should bring our backroom negotiations to the floor of the Senate for all of us to hear. That is why I voted to proceed with the bill. But we should do it on the basis of an actual bill. I, for one, am willing to wait and to be patient until we actually get the bill and then to proceed in an expeditious manner.

If we look at where the negotiations are and what we are attempting to achieve, we have a great opportunity to accomplish some very important goals for the people of this country. We all share the goal of improving our Nation's schools. We agree that everyone should be held more accountable for turning around failing schools. There is a bipartisan agreement that is very strong for ensuring that all children should be taught by high quality teachers and that parents should know the

quality of the schools their children attend.

This bill, so far as it is reported to us, does a tremendous job of strengthening accountability. I applaud Senators KENNEDY and BINGAMAN for leading the negotiations that have resulted in important accountability provisions.

Some have asked: Why don't we just call it quits. Let's just put in more accountability. Let's just test our children every year from third through eighth grade. We don't need to do any more than that.

I ask: What is it we are attempting to achieve? If all it does is to put more accountability on the already existing testing systems that every one of our States have employed, what is it we hope to achieve?

The answer is that in order to have real accountability, we have to marry those accountability measures with targeted additional resources, invested wisely, that will really make the difference as to whether the tests actually create better educational outcomes.

Resources would make a difference for children such as Delano Tucker, a fifth grader from PS 41 in the Bronx, who wrote me that his entire fifth grade class was asking for help to improve education. Here is what Delano said:

We need more books, but we can't do that without more money. My second reason is we need more teachers because classes are too crowded. The third reason is children are passing without knowing how to read.

We don't need to get a bunch of experts or Senators who can come up with a better analysis than what Delano just gave us. We need better teachers, more books, less crowded classrooms, and we should not be passing children who don't know how to read.

Resources would make a difference for the nearly 168,000 children who go to school every day in overcrowded classes in New York City. We are losing teachers every single day because teachers can't teach in the kind of circumstances that we are presenting for the state of education in many of our cities.

One New York City parent recently shared her thoughts with me, writing that:

I am a parent of two young children—one in kindergarten and one in third grade. They are both bright, but they suffer from learning difficulties, in part, because they are trying to learn in classes of 28 children. They are unable to get the individual attention they need because they are competing for the teacher's attention with so many.

How can we expect children in classes that are that crowded, given the difficulties and issues that children bring to school today, to be able to get the same quality of education that we know works so well when classes are smaller in the early grades?

Resources would have made a real difference for the fourth grade teacher at the 82-year-old Mechanicville Elementary School, just north of Albany, NY, who last year was struck in the

head by concrete from the ceiling as she was teaching because the school was in such disrepair.

My colleagues and I have heard similar stories from students and teachers in every State around the country. Although education is, and always will be, a local issue, it has to be a national concern. Some of the most severe problems in education today require national solutions. I think that is why we are here today debating education.

How will investing in school repairs and renovations help to raise student achievement? I think the answer is self-evident, especially if you have a teacher hit in the head with concrete falling from the ceiling. We know from research that children benefit when they attend school buildings that are in good physical condition.

A 1996 study of large urban high schools in Virginia found that student achievement was as much as 11 percentile points lower in substandard buildings as compared to standard buildings.

Another study found that the quality of air inside public school facilities may significantly affect students' ability to concentrate. In fact, the evidence suggests that children under 10 are more vulnerable than adults to the types of contaminants found in school facilities. We have seen reports and studies about working conditions in urban schools, concluding that they "have direct positive and negative effects on teacher morale, their sense of personal safety, their feelings of effectiveness, and on the general learning environment." That kind of scientific conclusion is reinforced by the experience of students in Mount Vernon, NY, who go to school with air ducts that are so old and so clogged up and filled with pigeon and rat droppings that they can't even breathe decent air; or the students in Cohoes, NY, who go to a school that banned the use of chalk because they have inadequate ventilation, and the chalk dust would hang like a curtain in the air.

Too many of our students are trying to learn in cramped trailers such as in this photo taken in Queens. These may be so-called "temporary" trailers, but they can end up representing a big part of a child's educational experience.

Too many of our children are in hallways with many distractions and far too little room. This photo represents a common sight in schools in New York. This is not a classroom. This is a hallway. The children aren't in a classroom that you and I remember, where there is a chalk board, a teacher's desk, and the desks of the children, and bulletin boards with pretty displays. This is a hallway and this is their classroom.

I don't know how much longer we can keep hearing stories about hallway classrooms, falling concrete, conditions in the classroom that are unhealthy, and not recognize that we should be helping our school districts, many of which cannot possibly afford to raise their property taxes. We can't

ask hard-pressed parents to put even more money into the property tax base. We should be helping the parents in those school districts.

During this debate, I will do everything I can to urge my colleagues to support Senator HARKIN's efforts to include authorization for an emergency renovation and repair fund that would certainly make a difference for some of the schools we just saw.

I will also be offering my own amendment to examine the impact of dilapidated schools on the health of our children. It is simply unacceptable in America in the beginning of the 21st century that our children should have to attend schools that not only impair their ability to learn but even make them sick.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator from New York yield for a question?

Mrs. CLINTON. Yes, I will.

Mr. REID. It is my understanding that the Senator from New York has had experience in the past in dealing with issues such as we are trying to deal with here. Is that true?

Mrs. CLINTON. Yes, that is.

Mr. REID. Would she tell the Senator from Nevada some of the things she has worked on in the past?

Mrs. CLINTON. As the Senator points out, I have been involved in improving education and reforming our accountability measures since 1983, when "A Nation At Risk" was first issued by then-President Reagan's Commission on Education. I was one of the first in our country to ask for much stricter accountability, to test not only students but also teachers, and to hold schools to a very high standard. If they did not succeed in passing 85 percent of their children beyond a level of acceptable learning outcomes, the school would be in danger of being taken over. That was 18 years ago.

So there is really nothing new in what we are discussing today, as the Senator from Nevada knows so well. We want to do the best job we can in raising standards; yes, we do. That is something many of us have worked on, and we have actually seen some positive results in some of our schools over the last 18 years. But we know there have to be the kind of conditions in learning circumstances in our classes, in our schools, that will enable these accountability measures to be successful.

Mr. REID. I will ask one final question to the Senator from New York. We know that there has been talk from the other side saying throwing money at the problem doesn't solve anything. The Senator from New York realizes that. But would the Senator also acknowledge that money is going to help some of these problems?

Mrs. CLINTON. As the Senator knows, when somebody says money doesn't make a difference, they are talking about somebody else and somebody else's money. Every one of us in this body goes to the extra length of

making sure that our children and any children we care about are given those kinds of resources that will enable a child to learn.

Money is not the only answer to what we need to do if we are serious about zeroing in on those children most in need. Most of our schools in this country are doing a fine job.

I live in a district in New York that is one of the best in the entire country. Many of the other districts in our suburbs and rural and city areas are producing good students who care about learning. Our real problems are in those areas with concentrated poverty.

I have seen the Senator from Connecticut come into the Chamber. He has a passion about getting our resources targeted where they can do the most good. So to anybody who says money is not the only answer, of course, I say money is not the only answer, but money helps when married to accountability and invested in getting rid of conditions such as the ones I am showing here on the picture where there are so many children in this classroom, where it is impossible for even the best trained teacher to be able to communicate effectively with these children. This is a classroom where the children are coming from backgrounds where English is not their first language, coming from concentrated poverty, often difficult family situations.

So when somebody says we don't want to throw money at it, I say, that's right. I want to target money to make sure we clean up our dilapidated classes and schools and that we provide lower class size so that the teachers who are willing to go into our hard-to-teach areas will be able to have a decent chance to reach these children; to recruit and retain teachers who come in with idealism and find themselves in situations such as this and within a year or two are gone.

For me, there isn't a contradiction here, as the Senator from Nevada knows so well. We need to have the kinds of accountability that is effective and will work but without the resources we are not going to be successful.

We are going to find, as I have said in the past, that we are just passing out thermometers in the midst of an epidemic. We are going to find that everybody has a raging fever, but we don't have the resources or the will to help them get well. We can do both. That is what this opportunity provides.

I appreciate the concern of the Senator from Nevada. We have to have a good debate. It is only fair, if we are asking that we invest more dollars in education from the Federal Government, we be able to justify the use of those dollars and we tell our constituents and our colleagues where they will go. I have pointed out they go to helping clean, repair, and construct schools we need. Second, they go to reducing class size. The situation shown in this picture is unacceptable.

We are under court order in New York City to have only certified teach-

ers in the classes. That sounds great, and I am for it, but in order to have certified, qualified teachers go into a situation such as this, we will have to make a contract with these teachers that this situation will improve; they will find they will have a chance, actually, to teach; otherwise, they will vote with their feet and either leave to go to a suburban district where they are paid a lot more, in a lot better situation, or they will leave teaching altogether.

I am not talking about something that is anecdotal. We have research from Project STAR in Tennessee that demonstrates children assigned to smaller classes in grades K-3 received better grades, higher test scores, and were less likely to drop out of school or be held back through their entire educational careers. This is a research study that has gone on for 15 years in the entire State of Tennessee. I applaud the State because they made the investment to evaluate what they were doing.

We found that the children who benefited the most were poor and minority children. By all means, test them and find out if they are failing. But be fair and give them a chance to succeed. That is what we are calling for when we ask for reduced class sizes.

We know if we don't recruit teachers we will not be able to continue teaching anybody. Right now we have a national crisis when it comes to recruiting and retaining teachers. There isn't any more important factor than teacher quality in improving student achievement. Yet if you are a young teacher placed in a situation such as this, if your classroom is a hallway, as I have seen in some schools in New York, a closet, that makes it very difficult to teach.

I recently heard from a constituent in Farmingdale, NY, who told me their elementary school alone needs 16 new teachers for kindergarten. In Buffalo, 231 teachers retired last year, compared with an average of 92 retirees in each of the preceding 8 years.

We can't just mandate that school districts go out and hire certified, qualified teachers without providing some resources to make that possible. We tried that in New York City. The court order said hire only certified teachers and put those certified teachers into the classes where the kids are most at risk. So the school district went out, hired 2,000 certified teachers, assigned them to schools as depicted in this picture and the previous pictures, and the 2,000 certified teachers wouldn't take the job. Who can blame them? They are certified teachers, qualified; they pass the tests; they have taken the courses; they are assigned to a school where the conditions to teach are impossible.

If we are going to say let's only have certified, qualified teachers, then for goodness' sake, provide help to districts such as those I represent so we can actually recruit and keep those certified, qualified teachers. I strongly

believe this bill should include a teacher recruitment section. I am working with a bipartisan group to offer an amendment to help school districts meet the demands for certified teachers.

Let me turn now to title I. I would like to paint a picture of what full funding for title I means for the children of New York City. Yesterday, several of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle came to the floor to talk about the failure of title I to improve student learning and dismissed the idea that fully funding title I could result in increased student achievement.

I want to be sure the American people have the facts about title I. The real fact, as presented by the independent, nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, is that in fiscal year 2001 Congress provided school districts with only one-third of the resources needed to fully serve eligible students in order to help close the achievement gap. Even with this limited Federal investment, our school districts have shown real gains in reading and math.

In 1999, the Council of Great City Schools found fourth and eighth graders in urban schools boosted their performance in reading and math. In fact, 87.5 percent of the urban school districts showed reading gains in Title I schools and 83 percent showed math gains. Moreover, the study found that the percentage of title I students in urban schools below the 25th percentile had been declining over 2- and 3-year periods while the percentage of title I students between the 25th and 50th percentile was increasing.

There are those who will still deny these facts and make the claim that title I doesn't make a difference. I often think Washington is the only evidence-free zone in our country. The facts are the facts. Title I does make a difference. Imagine the results if cities such as New York, Buffalo, Rochester, or Syracuse were able to assist all our title I eligible students rather than just a third of them. It would mean, for example, in New York City, we could lower the current threshold and serve an additional 99,295 children. The city could invest in strategies that work better. We could provide extended time initiatives that we know make a difference with children. We could expand early literacy intervention, and intervention strategies, have classroom professional development for teachers.

As we look at the bill, we need to look at a full investment in title I. It is not just a game of imagination but a real investment in student improvement that will pay off down the road. I will support Senator DODD and Senator COLLINS in their efforts to include full funding of title I in this bill.

Finally, let me touch on the issue of testing. In 1983, I called for student tests, high-stake student and high-stake teacher tests. I take a back seat to no one when it comes to using testing and other measures of accountability to find out how well we are

doing and hold ourselves accountable. But let's be sure the tests are actually going to accomplish the purpose for which they are intended. We need to look at how children do from year to year, to help teachers modify and individualize curriculum, and provide parents with timely information. We have to make sure that if they take a test in the winter, they get the results that winter, not the following fall when the children have moved on. We have to help schools know what the standard should be so they are not teaching to the tests but they are trying to measure the standards they have set. And we have to help pay for the tests.

In New York alone, it would cost \$16 million to comply with these new Federal testing requirements. Only \$8 million would be provided by the Federal Government; the other \$8 million is from scarce State resources. We need to be sure we are fair to our States. If we are going to mandate testing, let's not make it an unfunded mandate. Let's provide the resources needed. If we do develop and implement the tests, we need to have the resources to ensure that our children from the most disadvantaged circumstances can pass and excel in those tests. I think that means smaller classrooms, modern schools, quality teachers.

As we go forward in this debate, I hope we will think hard about the impact we will have on our children, and that we do everything we possibly can to make sure we don't just pass a bill but we really do provide the resources to reform education and produce better results across our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. How much time remains on each side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Twenty-five minutes remains on the Republican side and 22 minutes remains on the Democratic side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? If no time is requested, it will be deducted from both sides equally.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I would like to be notified when I have taken 3 minutes because I think it is very important that we discuss education reforms.

I think all of us have the same goal. Every one of us believes that public education is not meeting the standards we envisioned for this country when we established public education as the basis for democracy. The question is,

How do we do better? We have been adding more money for education for the last 50 years, but we have not seen an improvement in test scores or in the actual quality of education of our children who are graduating from public schools.

There are some public schools that are terrific. Those are the schools where parents and teachers and principals work together, where there is an openness, where the principal welcomes the parents to be a part of the process. But the schools that are failing are the schools that are afraid of accountability. There are teachers who do not want to have tests. Why don't they want to have tests? You can only assume they are concerned that they will not pass and that their students will not pass. That is not acceptable.

We have to have accountability. We have to have information for parents. Parents must know which schools are failing. If those schools are failing, we need to know how to bring them up to the higher standards. The best way to do that is to look at other schools that are alike in demographics, to allow them to see what the good schools with those demographics are doing. What are they doing right? That is what our reforms are meant to do.

We are focusing on accountability. Yes, it will hurt in some ways. It will hurt if you fail. But wouldn't we rather have a failure early in a school career, so we can correct it and give that child the real chance in life? Or do we want to continue social promotions with failing programs so the child never has the chance to reach his or her full potential? I do not think that is what we want. We want to let the child succeed. To do that, we need accountability. We might need failure so we know what the problems are and we can bring them up to standard.

That means we need to support the programs that work. We need to reduce bureaucracy. We need to increase flexibility. We need to empower parents. There is an absolute tie between parents who are involved and students who are successful. That is not based on the intellectual capacity of the student. When the parent is involved, the student does better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has elapsed.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am going to yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum because I have two more speakers on our side. Until I hear they are not going to make it, I am going to reserve their time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask to be notified when we have 15 minutes left. I assume that will give me about 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will do so.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I would like to talk about what the President's education plan does. The Democrats are claiming they have offered more spending on education. In fact, the President has proposed an 11.5-percent increase in overall education spending for fiscal year 2002. This is an increase of \$4.6 billion, to almost \$54 billion next year.

Included in this spending increase are key areas that we think will target the young people who need the help the most. It triples funding for children's reading programs, because we know if a child cannot read at grade level, that is a child who is going to fail. There is no question about it. Time after time after time, when high school dropouts or junior high school dropouts have been talked to and listened to, the problem is they can't read. Of course they are frustrated if they can't read. Of course they miss the key points in a history lesson or geography lesson or a math lesson. If they can't read, they don't have a chance. So we are targeting the spending increases at reading programs at the very earliest level.

That is why we want to test at the third grade level to see if a child is falling back at the third grade, because we can catch that child, we can save that child, if we can test at the third grade and give the child the extra help so he or she will have the chance to read at grade level and compete and absorb what is being given as their educational opportunities.

A 30-percent increase is in this budget for Hispanic-serving institutions and historically black colleges and universities. Those are two areas that are doing great work. I have worked very hard for Hispanic-serving institutions because I know if we put the money there and we give them the counseling they need in those universities, we will have good, productive citizens. Our high school dropout rate among Hispanics is the highest of any ethnic group in our country, and that is unacceptable. So we want to go for the Hispanic-serving institutions and give them that extra help so they will be able to graduate their young people into the good jobs that are available in our country.

The historically black colleges and universities do great service. I am going to give a graduation speech this weekend at Paul Quinn College, a historically black college that is doing a wonderful job of educating young people. They have a program at Paul Quinn College where the young men go out and mentor the high school students in some of the disadvantaged areas of Dallas. It enriches both the student who is being mentored and the mentor himself.

I see my colleague, Senator COLLINS, has arrived. I am going to ask her to talk about this subject because she is one of the leading Senate experts in

this education field. She is on the committee. She is making the contributions. She knows this bill, and she knows what it can do for public education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me start by thanking my good friend and colleague from Texas for her kind comments and for her leadership in this area. I have enjoyed working with her on a number of educational issues. We will be bringing one up later this week.

No endeavor is more important to our Nation's future than ensuring that all children receive a good education. In a real sense, the future of our country rests on the shoulders of our Nation's educators and depends upon the decisions we make today on how best to educate our leaders of tomorrow. I believe that this comprehensive education reform bill may well be the most important legislation the Senate debates this year. I am hopeful that we will pass a bill that keeps the inspirational promise made by President Bush "to leave no child behind."

In many cases, education is the difference between prosperity and poverty, hope and despair, dreams fulfilled and lost opportunities. Between Silicon Valley and Wall Street, many Americans still live in the shadows of the new prosperity. Education is the best, perhaps the only way, to close the every-widening economic gap in America. Indeed, the economic gap in America is largely an education gap. And, education is the best way for us to stoke the fire of our nation's economic engine.

The President deserves tremendous credit for making education his top priority and for setting a goal that inspires us all. This should not be, and I hope will not be, a partisan debate, but rather a bipartisan discussion on how we can best achieve the goal of leaving no child behind. I am convinced that, working together, we can help states, communities, local school boards, educators, and parents improve our public schools significantly.

The Better Education for Students and Teachers, or BEST, Act is an excellent start. The BEST Act demands a great deal from all of us. It would require parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, state legislators, governors, and federal officials to work together to ensure that our children reach high standards of academic excellence. It would give our schools more flexibility in spending federal funds while holding them accountable for what really counts: improved student achievement. The legislation requires schools to answer the fundamental question: "Are our children learning?"—rather than, "Was that federal paperwork completed correctly?" It changes the focus from paperwork and process to results and accountability.

During the past four years, I have visited more than 60 schools all over

the State of Maine, from Kittery at the southern tip, to Jackman in the west, Rockland on the coast, and Fort Kent in the north. I have seen firsthand the excellent work of Maine dedicated teachers. The quality of instruction taking place in Maine schools is impressive, and it is producing results. Maine's scores on national tests prove that our State's public schools are among the best in the nation. Moreover, Maine's public schools strive to provide a good education for all of our children regardless of their family income or where they live in our State.

A report issued last year by the Council of Chief State School Officers shows that, low-income students in Maine are performing nearly as well as the average of public school students in our state. Yet even in Maine, nearly one in four students has not acquired a level of literacy that is acceptable by most standards. Even in our strongest states, too many children are being left behind!

Eighteen years ago, the landmark study, "A Nation at Risk," warned of declining performance in American schools and turned the nation's attention toward reforming public education.

Today, however, too many schools, particularly in our inner cities, continue to fail to provide a solid education to their students. Although the United States spends more than \$660 billion a year on education, nearly 60 percent of our low-income fourth graders cannot read at a basic level.

The Federal Government takes a secondary role to States and communities in terms of funding and overseeing our public schools, and that is how it should be. The Federal role is, nevertheless, important, particularly for helping disadvantaged students.

Unfortunately, Washington has not always been helpful, nor has it been successful in achieving that goal. After spending \$125 billion of title I funding for disadvantaged students over 25 years, there is little to suggest that we are making progress in narrowing the achievement gap. Fewer than a third of fourth graders can read at grade level. If you look more closely at test scores, over time, you will notice the better students improving their performance while the worse students are getting worse. You also see a persistent achievement gap between students from a disadvantaged families and their more affluent peers. Although title I was created to put economically challenged students on even ground with their peers, recent data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) prove that the program has not achieved the goal of narrowing the gap in achievement.

A state-by-state analysis of scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the only test to measure student achievement nationwide, reveals troubling statistics that should give us pause, and that should cause us to ask what we should do dif-

ferently. Many of us believe that more money and more resources are needed, but we can't pour more money into a failed system. We need to increase the dollars, but we also need to demand change.

For example, let's look at the scores. There has been virtually no change since 1992 in fourth grade reading scores. As you can see from this chart, the line is flat despite the increase in expenditures over this 30-year period.

The analysis found that only two states—Georgia and Massachusetts—reduced the gap between white students and black or Hispanic students in fourth-grade math. No state did so in eighth grade, leaving gaps as wide as 56 points in Washington, DC, and 35 points in New Jersey. In reading, only Delaware reduced the gap.

Overall, only 32% of fourth-graders were deemed to be "proficient" or better in reading in 2000. Nearly four in 10 students nationally continue to read below a basic level, meaning they have serious problems understanding even simple texts.

Sixty-three percent of African-American fourth-graders, 60 percent of children in poverty, and 47 percent of children in urban schools fell "below basic" in their skills, meaning they have less than even a "partial mastery" of the material.

Again, look how flat these scores are, whether you are looking at the 4th graders, the 8th graders, or the 12th graders. This is the system that cries out for change. We have increased the amount of money we are spending. I support more investment in education. But we need to face the reality that what we have been doing in far too many cases has not been working. It has not focused on improving student achievement or on ensuring that every child gets a good education.

The Federal Government has spent a great deal of money on education programs over the past 35 years without a great deal to show for it. These statistics show that a new approach is needed, and a part of that new approach needs to be an increased focus on reading and literacy.

These results are particularly distressing given that researchers in recent years have reached a consensus on the best practices to teach reading. The research, however, has yet to find its way into many classrooms.

This is one reason why the Reading First Initiative in S. 1 is so very important. We need to put proven teaching methods into the hands of our educators. We know that if our classroom teachers are not offered extensive training in the area of literacy, then many of our children will not learn to read to the best of their ability. The Reading First Initiative makes professional development a top priority and it establishes an early reading intervention program that, I believe, will make a real difference.

I have worked extensively with the President and the Department of Education in this area, and I am very

pleased with the results that we have come up with. Earlier this year, I introduced the Early Reading Intervention Act to address the urgent need to improve reading skills. The reading portion of the BEST Act is a synthesis of the President's plan and my legislation.

It simply does not make sense to test a child's reading ability for the first time in third grade and discover the child's reading skills are far below his or her peers, when, at that point, the chances of the student learning to read at grade level by the end of elementary school are less than 25 percent. Yet, that is what occurs far too often with far too many of our children. By contrast, if a child is tested and receives help in kindergarten or first grade, that child has a 90 to 95 percent chance of becoming a good reader. Since reading is learned more easily and effectively during the early grades, it makes sense to identify reading problems and language-based learning disabilities early when intervention can make a difference.

Our goal—the goal set forth by the President—must be for all students to read by the third grade. By achieving this goal, we can decrease the number of students who will need special education and ensure that every child—all of our students—have the necessary tools to handle the curriculum in the future years.

An investment of \$5 billion to ensure that every child in America can read by the third grade is a serious and long-term commitment. It is a significant first step toward improving our Nation's failing report card for the best way to ensure that no child is left behind is to ensure that every child knows how to read.

I am also very pleased that the BEST Act contains the Rural Education Initiative, which I introduced with my colleagues, Senators CONRAD, GREGG, ENZI, HUTCHINSON, ROBERTS, DORGAN, BURNS, HAGEL, ALLARD, and THOMAS. This important legislation will give small rural school districts more flexibility by allowing them to combine small, categorical grant programs into a single grant that can be used to target local needs. It will also provide these rural schools with supplemental funds to compensate them for their inability to compete with larger school districts for a number of Federal education grants.

As I look forward to the important education debate ahead, I see great opportunity. I see a constructive debate not about whether the Federal Government has a role to play in educating our youth but about how it can best promote excellence in all of our public schools and for all of our children. I see a President with a vision for how we can reshape and reinvigorate our educational system and a commitment to doing what it takes to help our students succeed. And I see Senators, all of whom have listened to those who know best—our parents, our teachers,

our school board members and our administrators back home who have ideas on how to make the BEST Act even better.

Now is the time for us to lay a new foundation for the education of America's youth. It is time for us to seize this tremendous opportunity and to unite behind the inspiring goal the President has set forth of leaving no child behind.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time under the control of the majority has expired.

Mr. JEFFORDS. The minority manager has offered me 5 minutes of his time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, first of all, I commend the Senator from Maine for not only her excellent presentation but for her work on the committee. She is an invaluable member of our committee. I want to give her the accolades she deserves for what she has done to help us during this difficult time of trying to define how we can best improve the educational capacity of our Nation.

Today, the Senate begins its consideration of the Better Education for Students and Teachers Act. The BEST Act is an opportunity to combine our efforts with those of President Bush to guide the course of the No. 1 issue facing our Nation today: the education of our children. The BEST Act represents a bipartisan blueprint for meaningful education reform. We are putting forward an elementary and secondary education initiative that provides the necessary tools for every child to receive a quality education.

The BEST Act will strengthen accountability across the board to improve student performance, expand assessment programs so that parents and schools will have an accurate measurement of how well their children are learning, provide the funds necessary to prepare, recruit, and train highly qualified teachers, develop reading programs to ensure that all students will be able to read by the third grade, create partnerships for States and colleges and universities to strengthen K-12 math and science education, and provide for emerging technology activities that will boost student achievement.

BEST builds upon current law and requires States to create a single accountability system which will provide the mechanisms for moving all students toward proficiency. States must assess students in grades 3-8 annually in mathematics, reading and science. The results of these assessments will provide parents and the public an effective, highly visible measure of success and failure. Just as parents receive report cards to see how their children are performing in school, they will now be

able to get report cards to see how the school is performing for their children.

If schools are not measuring up to the standards, BEST requires States, local education agencies, and schools to improve overall performance. These tough, new accountability standards are the cornerstone of BEST.

BEST creates new programs to help our children learn to read at an early age. These programs are Reading First and Early Reading First. President Bush has set as a goal for the Nation that all students be proficient readers by the end of the third grade. This is critically important. An engineer will tell you that without a deep and strong foundation, you cannot build a tower. An educator will tell you that without strong and deeply rooted reading skills, you cannot reach a high academic level. Young students who cannot read—with speed, accuracy and understanding—are likely to fall further behind from their peers in reading ability and in all other subjects. Research has proven that the sills which make learning to read possible develop at a much earlier age. The Early Reading First demonstration program in BEST will provide preschool-age children who are 3 and 4 years old with the opportunity to gain the important language and pre-literacy skills identified by rigorous research.

BEST also recognizes that an investment in better teachers is an investment in our Nation's young people. Children can make greater academic gains if they have a knowledgeable and caring teacher leading their classroom. The bill takes a flexible approach that allows States and educational agencies to adopt successful models that will best meet their needs. Previous programs are combined to lessen the burden on schools and States. BEST puts an emphasis on innovative professional development program to maximize opportunities for teachers. At the same time, the bill requires professional development to be tied to effective strategies for increasing teacher performance and student achievement. BEST demands strong accountability in combination with effective approaches to get the best from our teachers and students.

Student achievement in the United States has fallen behind many other countries in the areas of math and science. BEST includes important new initiatives designed to improve upon performance here.

An enormous improvement in math and science education at the K through 12 level is necessary if today's students want good jobs and the U.S. wants to stay competitive in the world economy. If American students are not prepared to fill high-tech jobs that require advanced math and science skills, then those jobs will go elsewhere or people will come from other countries to fill them. To achieve this, BEST will allow for the establishment of math and science partnerships between institutions of higher learning, States, and

school districts. These partnerships will help our teachers become more effective, improve student achievement, and help keep our economy strong and vital.

BEST will also provide assistance to help eliminate the digital divide in the nation's schools. It is very important that we not separate technology from learning. Technology must not be used for its own sake. Technology must be used to improve student outcomes. BEST contains strong accountability provisions to ensure that this occurs.

We are faced with an opportunity to do what is right for the children of our country. We have a chance to improve their education, and to improve their lives. This bill increases accountability in the education delivery system on all fronts. It provides strong new assessments to ensure that all of our children are well served by their schools. It authorizes the necessary resources required to have first rate educational opportunities available to all children in this nation.

Mr. President, we are starting today on bringing forward the President's proposal which is the cornerstone of the future of this Nation's ability to improve its education. I praise the President for bringing this very excellent bill forward. We have worked hard on it on the committee. I am confident we will pass it and that it will become law.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak until someone from the Democratic side comes to reclaim their time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman of the committee that is going to bring forth the education bill. I am very optimistic we are going to have a bill. I thank him for working so hard in a very bipartisan way to produce a bill. The reforms are pretty well agreed to. Both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate are coming together to say: We need a change. Business as usual in our education system is not going to cut it anymore. There are too many children falling behind and nobody in this country wants that to happen. Every one of us knows our democracy depends on a well-educated populace.

Most people would agree that the variations in the standards of our public schools across the country mean we are not succeeding in the mandate for a quality public education system. That is why Chairman JEFFORDS and Senator KENNEDY, Senator COLLINS,

Senator FRIST, Senator GREGG, Senator HUTCHINSON of Arkansas, Senator SESSIONS of Alabama, and Senator ENZI have worked so hard to make sure this bill does not fall by the wayside.

I am a little frustrated that it has taken so long to get this bill to the floor. After all, this is a bill we have debated before. We actually debated it last session. It was not passed. We are back again. Surely there are divisions, but let's get the divisions out there. Let's get them out there. Let's make the decisions and let's reform public education so that every child in our country will have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential with a public education. That is our goal.

Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Oregon if his State has a testing program with accountability that would be something we would want to have as a nation. Has he had experience with accountability in the State of Oregon?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, we do have testing. I do not think it is on the scale that we are contemplating in this bill.

What I hear, as I travel the State of Oregon, over and over again from parents is: We would like to give more resources to education. We would like more accountability for that. We would like better results for that.

I commend the Senator from Texas and others on the committee, Senator COLLINS, and our friends on the Democratic side who are focusing on some very significant reforms in this bill. If I can cut through the arguments I am hearing, as I have listened and presided today, often we tend to confuse what we are about, whether we are about developing a system of employment for adults or whether we are about developing a system for educating children. If we can keep the focus on educating children, there are all kinds of things that become possible in terms of testing, not just kids but teachers as well, to make sure we are delivering results, that we are giving parents more choices so we give their children more chances.

In a nutshell, that is what I want to vote for: more resources but also more reform. If we do that, the American people will look at our work as Republicans and Democrats and thank us for generations to come. There is not a single thing we could do more significantly for the future of our country, for the parents and their children, than to provide more resources and to demand more reform. We keep our stewardship then.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Oregon. That is why President Bush has worked so hard to make this a priority to say that there is nothing more important we can do than to provide a quality public education for every one of the young people in our country.

I ask the Senator from Oregon if he would like the floor. If so, I am happy to yield.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I gave my speech because of the ques-

tion of the Senator from Texas. I thank her for that opportunity.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Oregon. I am pleased that he, too, is committed to reform. All of us know that if we are going to give every child a chance, we are going to have to make some changes. And some of those are going to be hard changes, there is no question about it.

Some of the people who are in the system today don't want testing. They don't like testing. I can understand that. But what is the alternative to accountability? What is the alternative to finding out what is wrong in our system?

If we can't admit that we have some weaknesses in the system and try to correct them, we will never get any better. What we want to do is find the weaknesses in the system and correct them while there is still a chance.

Let's correct the reading weaknesses in the third grade rather than in junior high school because we will have wasted years if we are not able to give a child a chance with the full capability to read in the third grade. Instead, if we wait until junior high school, we have wasted 6 years—6 years. Why would we do that?

It is time to take the bold steps. The President has asked us to do so. We have a bipartisan, general consensus in Congress, and I think it is time for us to act. I don't see any reason to start saying, well, if we amend one bill, then maybe we are going to have a substitute and what would that do to the amendment? Come on, can't we figure that out? Can't we say that all of the amendments passed by this Senate will go on to the final bill after the amendments are made, and if there is a substitute, they would go to that substitute? That is not rocket science. If we can't figure that out, then we have no business being here.

So I think it is time for us to act. We are wasting time. We have been talking about going to the education bill now for a week and 2 days. We are going to lose another day today if we don't start immediately to actually debate this bill. I hope that we will do that.

I want to outline a few more of the points of the bill, and I think this is a very important one. The plan is going to allow students who are trapped in failing schools to leave those schools by using title I funds to transfer to a higher performing public school or a private school if that is passed. I would like to see that because I want a parent to have all of the options. I don't want only parents who can afford private schools for their children to have the best. I want every parent to have the best. What could be more frustrating for a parent than to see their child in a school that is not performing and know that that child is never going to have the full chance in life and the parent can't change the school because the parent can't afford a private school or a parochial school. Why would we do that? We have the alternative.

In addition, education savings accounts will be increased to \$5,000 and expanded from K through 12, not just college anymore.

We also include additional dollars for States to use to control violence and other crimes in schools because there is no doubt that in our country, if children are not safe and secure in their schools, they are not going to have the optimum learning environment. No doubt about it, they must have secure schools and drug-free schools.

Parents will be given a greater flexibility for their child's best interest. School districts will be given greater flexibility. This will be accomplished by decreasing administrative costs and paperwork. When I do townhall meetings in my State, teachers come in and say: Get rid of the paperwork. Let me teach. Let me spend my time with the students finding out what they need and helping them learn.

One teacher came to a townhall meeting that I had with a stack of papers this big and said that is what she had been working on all week. Instead of being in the classroom or counseling children after class, she was filling out forms this thick. That is not what is going to improve public education. It is the attention a teacher can give to children, to assess what their weaknesses are and bring them up to speed.

We are going to provide technology assistance, and math and science instruction will be reemphasized, as well as basic literacy. Partnerships between schools and higher education institutions will be encouraged, and new Federal initiatives such as Reading First K through 12, and Early Reading First Preschool will offer States incentives to implement rigorous literacy education.

We have solved a problem in my home State of Texas. The University of North Texas has an accelerated math course for high school math prodigies, so that high school students with math aptitude can go to the University of North Texas and take college courses and get their high school degree with accelerated capabilities to go into college. This is so that you don't hold back the students who are already beyond high school competency. You give the child a chance to grow at his or her level and competency capability. It is quite exciting. I would love to see that happen all over our country, where an innovative, higher education institution would offer programs for high school students. I hope we will be able to encourage that by passing the bill that is before us.

We are also going to try to help teachers help themselves. They deserve recognition and assistance. The President's plan will allow teachers to make tax deductions of up to \$400 to help defray costs associated with out-of-pocket classroom expenses. I don't know a teacher that doesn't spend money from his or her own pocket to try to help the child get the tools the child needs in class, the crayons, or a ruler, or a tab-

let to write on, because the child comes to school without the proper school supplies. Many times, the child's family doesn't have the money for the school supplies. The teacher digs in her pocket and puts the money out and buys the supplies for the kids. That teacher does it because that teacher is dedicated. But we want to help defray those out-of-pocket costs. We want to give those young people the opportunity to have everything they need but not at the personal expense of the teachers. We don't pay teachers enough for the work they do anyway. The last thing we should expect is for them to defray the cost of their young people's school supplies out of their own pocketbooks.

Mr. President, as I close today, I want to say that there is nothing more important that we will do in this session of Congress than to reform public education, to make sure that public education gives every child the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. Yes, we think private schools are great and, yes, parochial schools are great, and they are a part of the option that a parent might have. But what we are responsible for is to make sure that every child has access to a public education that is quality and that competes with any other school in the world. That is what will keep our democracy strong, and that is what will fulfill our responsibility as Members of the U.S. Senate.

I can't wait to get to this bill because I have some amendments I want to offer that would provide creativity for our school districts, that would try to encourage more people to come into the classroom with expertise in an area—maybe not a teaching degree but someone with an expertise. I want to offer single-sex school classes in public schools as another option, which is now available in private schools but not in public schools to any great degree. I am going to talk about those amendments later.

I want to get on to this bill so that we can pass these reforms and so that the next school year that starts in September will be a school year that is different from the past 25 years and will have more options and more creativity and more capabilities for the young people of our country to excel.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I join my colleague in entreating to get this bill moving. I am proud to serve on the committee. It is badly needed.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I respond to the Senator from Virginia and mention that he, as a very senior member of the Senate, asked to go on the Education Committee because of his interest in improving our public schools. I appreciate he made that a priority. His contribution is very much one that has helped this process this year.

Mr. WARNER. If I may say to my colleague, at the time our conference was allocating that last seat, I knew of the interest of the Senator from Texas.

She extended to this Senator certain courtesies I shall not forget, enabling me to have that as my third committee. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BOB KERREY, DISTINGUISHED OFFICER

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I address the Senate with regard to Senator Bob Kerrey. I do this out of, first, a sense of duty. I was Under Secretary of the Navy beginning in February 1969, together with our most beloved and distinguished former colleague who sat behind me many years, Senator Chafee, who was the Secretary. Senator Chafee and I, then Secretary of the Navy and Under Secretary WARNER, were a very close working team. I have searched my mind many times as to what he would say were he here today. I think I can safely represent to the Senate that my remarks today would be very close to, if not exactly, what my dear friend, our former Senator and former Secretary of the Navy, would have said about our colleague, Bob Kerrey, this distinguished officer of the U.S. Navy.

I came to know him in the many years we served together in the Senate. We often sat together on the floor. I remember distinctly going over to his side of the aisle. We reflected on those days together of Vietnam. He shared with me some very personal insights with regard to that conflict and how they affected his life.

I am also very respectful of Senators MCCAIN, CLELAND, HAGEL, and JOHN KERRY. I have, likewise, had the benefit of listening to them and sharing with them my recollections of that incredible period of American history. I served in the Pentagon beginning in February 1969, leaving in 1974, for 5 years plus a few months during some of the most intense periods of that conflict. I visited Vietnam on occasions, as did Secretary of the Navy Chafee, and then when I became Secretary of the Navy, succeeding Chafee, of course, my visits continued. I have been on the fire bases, in the hospitals, where the wounded were brought back.

I remember one story, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Krulak, came to see me just before his confirmation to review various procedural matters with regard to his confirmation. We were there with General Mundy. He was then Commandant of the Marine Corps. We spent an hour together in a very thorough analysis of his background. I was doing it on behalf of then-Chairman STROM THURMOND. General Krulak got up to leave. This is a moment I shall never forget in my career as a Senator.